

**THE EMERGENCE AND PRACTICE OF CO-DESIGN AS A METHOD FOR SOCIAL
SUSTAINABILITY UNDER NEW LABOUR**

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ABSTRACT

Co-design emerged as method to promote social sustainability under New Labour (1997 – 2010). Socially focused design specialisms, such as a 'service design', 'transformation design', and 'social design and innovation', have used co-design to address some of the UK's most complex social challenges. These range from increasing public engagement to public service reform and health improvement, and are addressed by designers working collaboratively with a range of people affected by the challenges, such as the public, service providers and frontline workers.

This thesis examines the use of co-design for the promotion of social sustainability as it emerged from a number of coinciding agendas under New Labour, and as it faces a different future under the Coalition government. The research maps the ways in which co-design was promoted within the design industry, and supported by non-departmental government bodies such as the Design Council, NESTA, and the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement.

An extensive review of the existing literature on co-design, social sustainability, New Labour's social policy, and design and innovation agendas, provides a context for a range of interviews examining the reasons for the emergence of co-design. These twenty-five interviews were carried out with designers practicing co-design for social sustainability, senior professionals commissioning and promoting co-design and senior professionals working in engagement, education, social sustainability, social innovation and social policy.

The completed research describes and summarises a hitherto undocumented area of modern design history, and provides an understanding of the reasons for the emergence of co-design for social sustainability, for academics, government and practitioners. Ultimately the research allows the practice to reflect upon itself, providing an opportunity to help shape its future development.

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DEFINITIONS

Big Society - the Conservative Party's policy idea during the 2010 election and currently being developed and delivered under the Coalition with the aim to empower local people and communities, by taking power away from politicians and giving it to the public.

Co-creation – an approach to collaboratively engage, consult and develop solutions to problems, but is not design centric.

Co-design - a democratic approach that is focused on processes and procedures of design. It collaboratively engages, consults and develops solutions to problems.

Co-production - a collaborative approach to engage, consult, develop and deliver solutions to problems.

Design thinking - a design practice that combines empathy and creativity to generate insights into problems, and rationality to generate solutions to meet user needs.

Intermediary bodies - a group of organisations (such as the Design Council and NESTA) that have brokered projects between the public sector and design agencies.

Non-departmental public body - also known as a 'quango', or 'arm's length body' is a classification of public sector organisations that are not an integral part of any government department, although are ultimately responsible to parliament for their conduct.

Service design - the creation, development or adaptation of services to improve the customer's experience and their interaction with the service provider.

Social innovation - "the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs" (Mulgan 2007a 9).

Social sustainability - "A socially sustainable system that achieves fairness in distribution and opportunity, adequate provision of social services, including health and education, gender equity, and political accountability and participation" (Harris and Goodwin 3).

Stakeholders - any person with a vested interest in a project.

Transformation design – "new thinking and practical design solutions in the form of systems, services and products. [The] approach is human centred, involving users, business and service providers in the design process [to] explore a wide range of [social] issues" (Cottam and Leadbeater 1).

Target audience - a specific group of the public that are the focus of a project.

ABBREVIATIONS

CPP – Creative Pioneer Programme

DIUS – Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills

DOTT – Design of the Time

DTI – Department of Trade and Industry

EBD – Experience Based Design

GT – Grounded Theory

HM Treasury – Her Majesty's Treasury

ICSID - International Council of Societies of Industrial Design

IDeA – Improvement and Development Agency

IIPS – Institute for Insight in Public Services

LA21 – Local Agenda 21

NESTA – National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts

NHS – National Health Service

NHS Institute – NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement

NSMC – National Social Marketing Centre

PCT – Primary Care Trust

RSA – Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce

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PREFACE

In 2005 I graduated from Goldsmiths College, University of London with a degree in Design. The programme was conceptual, broad and not discipline-specific, so that there were no modules on subjects like product design, graphic design or web design. Instead, the course was process-focused and taught skills such as 'design thinking' and lateral problem solving.

In my final year, I worked on a self-initiated project to design ways of encouraging people to cook from scratch, a skill that is becoming lost in the younger generation. At the same time, a friend on the course devised a project that commented on the UK's etiquette regarding food through a range of designed objects. During this time we discussed how design could be used to address the increasing social problem of obesity in the UK and the factors that cause it. This discussion led to a business plan, for which we sought and gained funding.

In the first year of setting up the business, Uscreates, we expanded our use of design and problem solving skills to work with the public sector in a number of ways: creative community engagement and consultation, and designing spaces in schools for better social interaction. Holding the disparate work together was the concept of social sustainability: all our work was intended to improve our society and sustain that level of improvement.

During my first year at Uscreates, I decided to undertake a Ph.D, to understand why designers like us were being commissioned to address a range of social challenges, using a range of design skills in new, **collaborative** and unconventional ways. My business partner and I were aware that a handful of other design agencies were operating in the same way we were, and that there was growing interest from the Design Council¹ and NESTA².

During my research, I have met other Ph.D candidates who have been exploring the use of 'co-design' for social challenges, and I read widely, and attended workshops and conferences that attempted to formalise the co-design method and promote its benefits. However I never met or heard of anyone who addressed exactly how and why designers were working collaboratively within the public sector to *design* solutions to social challenges.

Even after completing the research, I still have not found any publications on the reasons behind the emergence of co-design for social sustainability, and yet it is very important to understand why and how a new niche for the design industry emerged, not only for historical

¹ Under New Labour the Design Council was a non-departmental public body that was funded by the Department of Business Innovation and Skills and the Department of Culture, Media and Sports. It is the 'national strategic body for design' and promotes the use of design throughout business and public services, as they believe that design can aid the economy and society.

² NESTA was founded in 1998 by an act of Parliament to promote the use of science, technology and the arts. Interest from a £250 million endowment fund from the National Lottery supports their work that focuses on innovation to tackle social and economic issues within the UK, and supporting the creative industries in business expertise. Under New Labour it ran as a non-departmental public body and had its status changed to a charitable body by the coalition in 2010.

purposes, but also in order to improve co-design practice in the future. This thesis begins to answer those questions.

INTRODUCTION

The last decade has witnessed the emergence of 'co-design', a new design methodology to address social challenges and support the quest for social sustainability. However, very little understanding exists as to **when** and **why** co-design emerged and how it is being practiced. Co-design is recognised in a handful of European, Australasian and North American countries, but most prominently in the UK, which is the setting for this research.

Under New Labour (1997 - 2010), a small group of designers and design agencies started to be commissioned by public sector organisations to work on projects addressing complex social issues by using collaborative techniques involving the people who understand the problems most fully. These people (or stakeholders) consist of the public affected by the issue, the service providers and commissioners whose organisations exist to support those affected, and the frontline workers who deliver the intervention.

In co-design the stakeholders work alongside the designers as part of a collaborative problem solving process, identifying the drivers behind social challenges, and the barriers to addressing them, before generating, developing and implementing potential solutions. By collaborating with stakeholders throughout the problem solving process, designers reach outcomes based on an in-depth understanding of the issues from a range of stakeholder perspectives, and therefore designed around the people who will be ultimately using or delivering the solutions.

Co-design has adapted older practices of 'community design', 'user-centered design' and 'participatory design' to establish itself as a method used by socially focused design specialisms: 'social design and innovation', 'transformation design', and 'service design' (which can also be commercially focused).

Co-design for social sustainability developed during a period in which New Labour strove to create citizen-centered public services, and sustainable communities that met the needs of all their citizens so that the most disadvantaged are not left behind (Great Britain 2006a). These two visions were part of New Labour's larger, overarching agenda of citizen engagement and involvement.

The promotion and encouragement of more participatory approaches to service and community improvement and reform demanded external expertise. Socially focused design specialisms using co-design offered the skills required and as a result, design agencies using these specialisms promoted themselves within the public sector. Over the last decade (2000 – 2011), design agencies and free-lance designers have been working within the public and social sectors using co-design methodologies, processes and practices to address a range of social and public service challenges.

Within the design industry, co-design has been recognised, encouraged and actively promoted by bodies like the Design Council, NESTA, and exploratory programmes such as *Design of the time* (DOTT)³. Co-design has also been a key topic at conferences⁴, and the subject of other doctoral research in progress from Ph.D candidates Lauren Tan and Deborah Szebeko.

There is a growing body of research into co-design (Bason 2010; Sanders 2006; Sanders and Stappers 2008; Szebecko and Tan 2009): the methods it uses, the variations in process, the benefits, similarities and differences between 'co-creation' and 'co-production'. Despite the growing interest, the emergence of socially focused co-design under New Labour remains unexplored. In addition there has been little attempt to map the areas in which co-design has been practiced, and who has been commissioning it. One-off case studies in design journals, magazines and design agency websites provide individual cases, but no well researched and detailed review of co-design projects exists.

This research examines the events and decisions that led to the public sector commissioning design agencies using co-design, and the ways in which it was commissioned and used under New Labour. The role and scope of design and public participation are notions that much of public and social sector still struggle to fully understand and practice, so how and why was it recognised and promoted ten years ago?

During the five-year period that this research was undertaken, there has been a change in government. This study started under one government and was forced to become a study under two, adding to the complexity of investigating a topic that is in itself evolving and maturing. Therefore the study is organised into three sections that concentrate on New Labour, but also speculate about the future of co-design under the Coalition:

1. The emergence of co-design as a method for promoting social sustainability under New Labour
2. The practice of co-design as a method for promoting social sustainability under New Labour
3. The future of co-design as a method for promoting social sustainability

The first section introduces co-design, its roots in user-centred and participatory design practice, and how it differs from more recent notions of co-creation and co-production. The design specialisms using co-design are mapped, and an overview of the main agencies provided. Alongside this, the emergence of social sustainability is traced, from its origins in the *Brundtland report* (1987), through to the later New Labour white papers, such as *Securing the*

³ DOTT, a Design Council programme delivers design-led projects with local communities to address challenging social, environmental and economic challenges.

⁴ Such as Changing the Change (2008), Intersections (2007) and Inspired at Beruthan (2010).

Future (Great Britain 2005d). As participation is a key element of social sustainability, an in-depth exploration of public engagement under New Labour and preceding governments is documented.

The final chapter in section one identifies the events that supported the emergence of co-design for social sustainability. The chapter explores how awareness about innovation, social innovation and the role of design was raised by reports such as the *Cox Review* (2005) and numerous papers from the Young Foundation⁵. It reviews the institutional support that NESTA's *Creative Pioneer Programme*, the Design Council's DOTT programme, and the NHS Institute of Innovation and Improvement⁶ gave design agencies.

The second section of the thesis examines the practice of co-design under New Labour, identifying the commissioners and their commissions. This section also investigates the co-designed deliverables that resulted from the commissions with a range of case study illustrations. The final part of this section explores the skills and qualities designers possess that enable them to work collaboratively on projects with a social intention.

The third and final section reviews the outlook for co-design in the future in the context of the change in government in 2010, and the Coalition's desire to increase citizen participation through agenda as such as the Big Society⁷. Design education, the ethics of collaboration and evaluation of the practice are identified as key factors in the future success of co-design and are also discussed.

This research documents a part of modern design history and should be of importance to:

- the design industry, and the public and social sectors in their mission to work more innovatively and collaboratively with the public
- the public sector, by providing understanding of how co-design can be used on projects that have a socially sustainable agenda
- academics and practitioners, providing the context for the evolving practice of co-design for social sustainability
- design education and the future training of designers in order to produce practitioners who can use a co-design methodology for social sustainability

⁵ Young Foundation was formed in April 2005 after the Institute of Community Studies and the Mutual Aid Centre merged. The Institute of Community Studies was a think tank founded in 1954 and lead by Michael Young and through the organisation over 60 organisations were set up including the Open University and the Consumers' Association and Language Line. The foundation focuses on developing innovative ideas that support society. Geoff Mulgan currently heads the Young Foundation and is well positioned within the social innovation sphere due to his past positions as the Director of Policy at 10 Downing Street Tony Blair, Director of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (formerly known as the Performance and Innovation Unit), and Chief adviser to Gordon Brown MP in the early 1990s.

⁶ The NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement is an arm's-length body sponsored by the *Department of Health* to "transform healthcare for patients and the public by rapidly developing and spreading new ways of working, new technology and world class leadership" (Institute for Innovation and Improvement).

⁷ The Big Society was the Conservative Party's policy idea during the 2010 election and currently being developed and delivered under the Coalition with the aim to empower local people and communities, by taking power away from politicians and give it to the public.

- governments abroad seeking more democratic and innovative solutions to social challenges
- the design profession, by identifying how co-design emerged and is practised, it should help to enable us to further develop and promote it in the future.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review aims to provide context for the thesis. Literature has been sourced from predominately UK journals, books, government documents and topical magazines within the disciplines of design, sustainability, governance and community engagement. The literature is critically appraised and summarised within this review.

The review does not provide scholarly commentary on the precise subject area of the dissertation, as no publications on this topic have been found. However there are publications that frame the subject areas: achieving social sustainability, the practice of co-design, and New Labour's support for public participation, innovation and social welfare. The knowledge and ideas from the literature provide some understanding of how and why co-design *emerged* as a method for promoting social sustainability in the last decade. The remaining questions have found answers through interviews and firsthand experience of practice in this area.

Reviews of the following were undertaken:

- the origins, theory and practice of the methodology of co-design
- participatory and user-centred practices under New Labour
- the design specialisms using co-design
- the origins, theory and promotion of social sustainability in general, and under New Labour
- New Labour's innovation agenda.

To understand the *practice* of co-design under New Labour, a review of literature provided little conclusive evidence. Case studies have been documented sporadically to demonstrate what co-design is and the processes and methods associated with it, but no attempts were found to gather information on the activity surrounding the practice to determine who was commissioning it, what it was being commissioned for, and what the outcomes were. Instead, I analysed the content on design agencies' websites, interviewed the designers themselves and reviewed literature around the following subjects:

- case studies of co-design
- programmes and projects that used co-design
- conferences and events which promoted co-design.

1.1 Co-design

In the past 10 years the practice of design has changed in a number of ways; design teams often include non-design professionals, such as scientists, sociologists, and engineers, and there has been a trend to include the end user of the design outcome in the development of ideas (Siodmok 2008). This participatory methodology has become known as co-design, which

“shifts the balance from designer as judge, arbiter and auteur to designer as guide, facilitator and producer” (Billings 2011:18).

1.1.1 Defining co-design

As Sanders and Stappers highlight in *Co-Creation and the New Landscapes of Design*, co-design is currently practiced and discussed by practitioners and academics in many different ways. As a result there is not a clear consensus on a definition. The Design Council has developed an online glossary through crowd sourcing (an open call to a large group or community (a crowd)), which provides the following definition:

A term, short for collaborative design, that means a community centred methodology that designers use to develop a partnership with a product or service's end users, in order to make their solution more effective (Design Council "Design Glossary").

This definition of co-design is accurate within the commercial sector where a designer is commissioned, or exists in-house, to work with a group or 'community' of end users with a collaborative methodology. However within the public sector, the co-design process often includes working with more than one community. In addition to working with end users, the commissioning organisation, frontline public sector staff and many other relevant stakeholders are involved⁸. With this in mind a definition of co-design provided by the think tank Demos is more suitable when describing co-design in the context of this thesis, which focuses on the public sector and social sustainability.

Bradwell and Marr writing for Demos state that a co-design approach involves:

- participation – to ensure the co-design process designs with people, not for people
- development – co-design is continually learning from itself
- ownership and power – “shifts power to the process, creating a framework that defines and maintains the necessary balance of rights and freedoms between participants” (Bradwell and Marr 2008:17)
- outcomes and intent – co-design is based on outcomes and aims to produce a clear, practical focus to the direction of work

A survey of collaborative design literature, which included texts on co-creation, participatory design and co-design, by Wang and Oygur resulted in their conclusion that it is “still in the process of being clearly defined” (2010: 355). This demonstrates the confusion surrounding the term co-design and how it is often treated as synonymous with co-creation (Sanders and Stappers). When Sanders and Stappers published their paper *Co-creation and the New*

⁸ As seen from website content of Engine – www.enginegroup.co.uk, live|work – www.livework.co.uk, thinkpublic – www.thinkpublic.com, Uscreates – www.uscreates.com.

Landscapes of Design in 2008, they mentioned that there were no online definitions of co-creation or co-design, and the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, only had preliminary entries on the methodologies. Three years later, little has changed. The Wikipedia entries are still insubstantial, and solely focus on co-creation and co-design in terms of business and marketing strategy. They do not even mention their use in the public sector for social sustainability.

By 2009, Sanders had refined her thinking on co-creation and co-design:

The concept of co-design is directly related to co-creation. By co-design we refer to collective creativity as it is applied across the whole span of a design process. By these definitions, co-design is a specific instance of co-creation (Sanders and Simons 1).

This thinking appears to be built on by the Design Council in their DOTT Cornwall programme and the DOTT Cornwall methodology, which consists of a six stage collaborative approach to creative solutions, of which co-design is one of the stages:

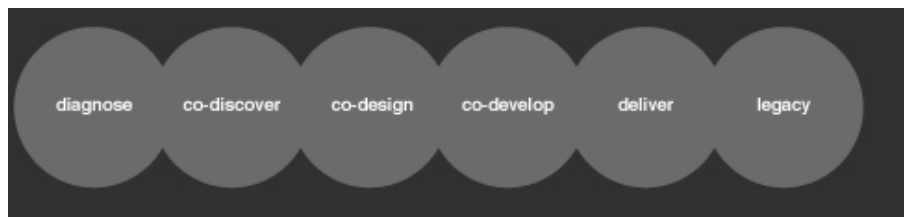


Figure 1. DOTT methodology (Design Council “Design Methods”).

One of the most recent publications on co-creation and co-design (Bason 2010) simply breaks down co-creation as a practice into two principles, collaboration and design thinking:

The first element of co-creation is an appreciation of *design thinking* . . . Citizen involvement is also key. People – including citizens business and third-sector actors – are not only at the receiving end of public regulation, interventions and services, but also stakeholder and innovators in public policy (Bason 2012:27).

1.1.2 Design thinking

‘Design thinking’ as a term was first referred to in a design context by Rowe as an account of the “decision making processes” (1991:15) that architects and urban planners used to solve problems. Buchanan (1992) notes that as ‘design’ continues to expand in “meaning and connections”, design thinking has developed as a method to address ‘wicked’ or difficult human-centred problems. It was through the US and UK based design and innovation agency IDEO, and its CEO Tim Brown, that design thinking was explored and promoted in practice as well as

literature, (T. Brown 2008a ; Kelley and Littman 2001) websites (IDEO) and verbal presentations (T. Brown 2009b).

Brown describes 'design thinking' as "a discipline that melds the sensibility and methods of a designer to people's real-world needs, leads the way to customer value and market opportunity" (T. Brown 2008b). IDEO has developed design thinking as a practice that combines empathy and creativity to generate insights into problems, and rationality to generate solutions to meet user needs (Jones). It is this user-centred approach to solving problems which is reinforced within co-design practice.

In 2008, the *Harvard Business Review* published an article, "Design Thinking" (T. Brown 2008a), and in 2009, *Business Week* in the USA followed with a 'special report' on the subject with the same title. The essence of both articles is that design thinking can help businesses to improve their offer, and develop new ones, therefore becoming more profitable. Merholz argues against this view on his blog, saying it implies that with the adoption of new right-brained creative techniques, left-brained MBA-trained employees can alter the future of their organisation, when actually it has to be someone who is able to do both. Nussbaum (2011), who was once an advocate for design thinking, now believes that design thinking has exhausted its offer, and his book is about a new conceptual framework: 'creative intelligence'.

Nussbaum (2011) regards design thinking as a scaffold for the real deliverable: creativity. To appeal to business, the 'mess' that comes with creativity had to be managed, and this was done through packaging the creative process and labeling it 'design thinking'. However, turning it into a linear process resulted in a loss of creativity, and companies were urged by design agencies to embrace and trust in the chaos of creativity. He acknowledges that one of the successes of design thinking was that it shifted the focus of design from artifacts and aesthetics to "the much wider social space of systems and society". In the same way that design thinking is a well-packaged and branded way of selling creativity to the private sector, co-design and co-creation could be viewed as promoting creativity in the public sector.

1.1.3 Is co-design design?

There has been, and continues to be, much debate regarding the 'design' status of co-design, especially in light of the similarities with co-creation, which does not necessarily apply to design or designers. During conferences such as *InterSections 2007* and *Changing the Change*, debates have been held as to whether co-design is a form of design. The argument against is that the outcomes of co-design projects do not need specific design skills in order to be created and produced.

An example of this is found in the Design Council Magazine, with a case study on the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, which commissioned service designers to evaluate

the working set up and layout of hospitals (Design Council 2009). The designers noted that the anti-bacterial dispensers were the same colour as the walls, making them difficult to identify, and they were inaccessible for children and people in wheelchairs. One of the outcomes of the project was to rectify this. The use of the term 'design' to describe this outcome was debated during 'question time' at *InterSections 2007*, with many highlighting that anyone could have identified these problems and created solutions. However, arguments have been made to defend 'design'. Lynne Maher, from the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, said:

Designers look at how people use a space. This different style of observation is helping us identify problems and get systems right (Maher 2007).

As seen from the above, the outcome of a project that uses a co-design methodology can literally be anything that the designers and the people collaborating with them deem to be the solution. This is where confusion arises, as 'design' has traditionally been associated with craft (Conway 2002; Cooper and Press 1995 ; Lees-Maffei and Houze 2010). During the Industrial Revolution, 'design' evolved to create products and inventions (Thackara 2007), and in the 1950's the idea of styling this stream of products was borrowed from America, and soon was added to the designer's collection of skills (Sparke 1998). Styling as a form of branding and marketing (not to be confused with 'style', which has been a part of design as long as the self-conscious creation of objects) was extended to include fashion. The public perception of design continues to include craft, products and fashion, and more recently web design, typography and illustration (which was brought under the title of graphic design with the introduction of computers) have joined the list. However service design and social design are not commonly recognised as a form of design.

Much research has tried to answer the question 'what is design?' (Banks 2004; Heskett 2005; Marcus 2002; Press and Cooper 2003) Although this thesis does not focus on this question, it is important to revisit recent answers in order to understand how co-design is related. The 2005 *Cox Review*, a report for the HM Treasury into creativity and business in the UK, defined design as "what links creativity and innovation. It shapes ideas to become practical and attractive propositions for users or customers. Design may be described as creativity deployed to a specific end" (Cox 2005:2).

The European Commission and Sir James Dyson in his *Ingenious Britain* report for the Conservative Party in 2010, similarly viewed design as a broad discipline that is concerned with more than just aesthetics. Other commentators have a variety of interpretations, categorised as "six essential characteristics of design" in a 2010 report, *The Economic Rationale for a National Design Policy*, for the Department for Business Innovation and Skills:

- Multi-Faceted
- A Link from Creativity to Innovation

- Offers Competitive Distinction
- Planning and Problem Solving
- From Chaos to Order
- Systems Thinking (Swan 2010:7)

Andrea Siodmok, the chief design officer at the Design Council at the time, looked at defining designers as well as design:

The defining characteristic of designers, it has been said, is that they are eternally optimistic but continually dissatisfied. As such there is something of the designers in all of us. In fact the act of 'designing' is something inherently human (Siodmok 2008:24).

Michael Bichard, the former chair of the Design Council, sums up the current understanding of design in *The Good Design Plan*: "Good design solves problems" (Bichard 2008a:6). Co-design is a particular method for solving problems and in that sense can be classed as 'design'. However this is still hard to comprehend for many (Woodhuysen 2007), especially when co-design is being promoted and used within the public sector to address social challenges.

Most recently, 2011, Cope and Kalantzis explore the subtly shifting semantics of 'design' in *'Design' in Principle and Practice: A Reconsideration of the Terms of Design Engagement*:

Design is never simply an instantiation of received conventions, derived from what might at times seem to be the stable disciplinary rules of technology or aesthetics. It is always and necessarily a process of transformation. As such it is an agency of change (Cope and Kalantzis 2011:49).

They review some of the transformations that design is navigating its way through, including what they refer to as "participatory politics" (2011:51) with local communities, or what this research is calling, co-design for social sustainability.

As all the examples above demonstrate, and as Williams et al. acknowledges, the design sector has been exposed to significant change including the service sector as a context for design and the increasing responsibility of design and sustainability (2009:40).

1.1.4 The design element of co-design

Numerous publications have explored and discussed the wider topic of creative thinking over many decades (Hutchinson 1949; Patrick 1955) and how a 'non-creative' person can develop their understanding of the creative process, most famously Edward de Bono in *Lateral Thinking* and *Six Thinking Hats*.

Many creative thinking books have been written with business innovation in mind; how to expand horizons, create and develop new ideas, and become confident as a creative thinker (Adair 2007). Others focus on the psychology of creative thinking (Pink 2006) and how a greater understanding of it can then be taught and learned by anyone (Claxton and Lucas 2007 ; Lucas 2001).

In recent work, there have been studies into why a handful of designers have changed from a traditional object-based practice to focus on addressing social challenges and creating social innovations. The studies, however focus on why designers are good at innovating (Kelley and Littman 2001) or 'design thinking' (T. Brown and Wyatt 2010), rather than the causes of the change itself.

Kelley (2001) explores the persona of 'the collaborator', bringing people together from different backgrounds and disciplines to identify possible solutions to problems. Kelley provides numerous examples of different types of collaborators and collaborations that have resulted in innovation, but does not delve deeper to understand what it is that designers, or creative people more generally, possess that makes them good at collaboration. Poggenpohl and Sato (2009) identify why designers collaborate, attributing it to the ability of the designer to recognise his or her limitations regarding their knowledge and skills. Poggenpohl and Sato also examine what the special 'design intelligence' might be that enables some designers to be successfully addressing complex social problems. They acknowledge that:

For some reason, the design research community has always had something of a blind spot for the study of design intelligence – indeed, it has had a blind spot for anything connected to the designer. There has always been an overwhelming focus on modelling and supporting the process of designing. But any study of design, and any method for aiding design activities, necessarily contains statements or assumptions about (. . .): the dynamics of a design process, the designer, the design task, and the context in which the design activity takes place (Poggenpohl and Sato 2009:288).

This sums up why part of my research therefore drills down further to Kelley's and Brown's subject matter, and attempts to understand *why* designers are good at collaboration. Kelley, Brown and Poggenpohl and Sato's work provides the platform from which this question can be answered.

1.1.5 The collaboration element of co-design

The transfer of control from designers to participants has been discussed in the context of the twenty first century by Thackara (2005) and Sanders (2006). They note that as the influence of

technology expands, there is a shift in control from the designer to the user. Thackara talks of a world that is based 'less on stuff and more on people'. Many of the new technological advances enable people to carry out daily activities in new, efficient ways.

Sanders (2009) discusses how designers need to shift their focus from 'consumers' and 'users', to 'participants' and 'co-creators'. Mat Hunter (2011a) *Chief Design Office* at the Design Council summed up this transition when speaking at *Inspired at Bedruthan Think Tank*, a DOTT Cornwall event, saying that it is no longer about design *for* people, but *with* them.

Recently this idea has been further developed, so it is no longer about designing *with* people, but people designing for themselves, developing ownership of the process and the outcome. Demos's definition of co-design at the beginning of this section mentions the concept of creating ownership from a collaborative approach. This is in line with a relatively new concept, 'co-production' (Boyle and Harris 2009; Pestoff and Brandsen 2008).

Co-production is very much under discussion and in use in the UK. Policymakers and non-departmental public bodies are using the term, such as the Social Care Institute of Excellence, NESTA, The Department of Business Innovation and Skills, and it is being discussed at conferences held by The International Research Society for Public Management and the European Group for Public Administration (Pestoff and Brandsen 2008).

Like many new ideas, the term 'co-production' is used in a loose sense that spans a range of related concepts. "There is no agreed definition, nor are many people yet clear about where the idea came from or its full implications" (Boyle and Harris 2009:3). Although there is no agreed definition, Duggan identifies two very similar definitions in Moore and Joshi (2004), and Bovaird (2007):

Institutionalised co-production [as the]... provision of services... through a regular long-term relationship between state agencies and organised groups of citizens, where both make substantial resource contributions. (Moore and Joshi 2004:1).

Provision of services through regular long-term relationships between professionalised service providers (in any sector) and service users or other members of the community, where all partners make substantial resource contributions (Bovaird 2007:847).

Although all the definitions are similar, Pestoff calls attention to the fact that much of the discussion surrounding co-production is based on political ideology rather than research, and that there is little knowledge or evaluation of the benefits of public involvement in service delivery. So that although co-production is being hailed as a new way of thinking about the

delivery of health, education, policing and other public services that will make them more effective, efficient and sustainable (Boyle and Harris 2009), it is too early to judge its impact.

1.1.6 Co-design in the private sector

Within the commercial sector, co-design has its roots in business and marketing (Sanders and Stappers 2008), in notions of placing the customers' experience of the product, service or proposition at the centre of the company's vision (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2010; Tseng and Piller 2003). Seybold (2006) in *Outside Innovation: How Your Customers Will Co-Design Your Company's Future* writes about how businesses that encourage customers, or product/service users to co-design what they desire can 'unleash innovation'. From Seybold's account, one of the main differences between co-design for commercial gain and co-design for social gain is that the former is carried out with a small group of people selected by the commercial organisation who represent the consumer, but who are considered to be more creative than most. In this situation, the group of people collaboratively working with the designers plays a role that Sanders (2008) describes as 'user as subject' rather than 'user as participant'. The designer provides activities and exercises from which they can observe and develop designs, whereas when the user takes the role of participant (which is more common in the public sector) they have more influence over the development process.

Taking the two key aspects of co-design (collaboration with users, and design) it is possible to look further afield for thoughts and opinions. Eric von Hippel's (2006) *Democratizing Innovation*, explores the ways in which users of products and services are increasingly developing ways to innovate and make improvements themselves, rather than waiting for the manufacturers or service providers to do so. This results in the users getting exactly what they want. Hippel points out that this user-led innovation process has attracted the attention of social welfare agencies as many governments in the western world desire a more democratic and user-centric approach to social innovation. Despite raising this point, Hippel mentions little else about democratic approaches to generating innovation within the social sphere.

1.1.7 Co-design in the public sector

The use of co-design for social sustainability occurs within the public and voluntary sectors, which have a long history of working collaboratively with the public on social matters. Initially in the 1960s, the practice of working with the public centered on urban and architectural design and planning (Driskell 2002). King et al. (1989) provide one of the earliest accounts of co-design in *Co-design: A Process of Design Participation*. The book focuses on community architecture in the 1970s, and outlines a step-by-step account of the workshops that were delivered to facilitate the process, providing an in-depth model with which to develop co-design techniques.

At the start of the 21st century the scope for community involvement and participation expanded. This was reflected in publications which maintained that the public, especially those who are marginalised, are capable of analysing the social challenges they find themselves affected by, and devising solutions to address them (Creighton 2005; Kumar 2002). The majority of publications focused on providing methods, guides and tools to help people do this, but few provided an account for why participation occurred. Towers (1995) is an exception with *Building Democracy* which provides a historical account of the reasons behind the community architecture movement, and how a democratic approach could be of use in a wide-ranging social and environment problems.

Although the above authors discuss democratic and user-centric approaches in a field that can be summed up as 'social sustainability', they do not mention co-design specifically. This is a far newer method which developed at the same time as *Experience Based Design*; a 'user-focused design process' that emphasises service users' experiences, and using these experiences to improve public services, predominantly in healthcare (Bate and Robert 2006; Institute for Innovation and Improvement 2011; Szebecko and Tan 2009). Bate and Robert emphasise that service users are not expected to become experts in design or in service provision, but that their particular knowledge of a service is invaluable.

Co-design in the social arena is the focus of this thesis and from this point on, all mention of the term and its practice will refer to a social context.

1.1.8 Design specialisms using co-design

Co-design is a method that a small number of UK design agencies use within their wider practice. These design agencies are practicing what is known as social/innovation/service or transformation design. Co-design is a method used within all of these specialisms.

Professor Birgit Mager (2006) from the Köln International School of Design, details the context in which service design has formed, stating that there has been a rapid expansion of the service industry since the 1980s. Despite the expansion, there were no formal methods for the development and creation of services and it was not until the 1990s that service design existed as a term (Bill Hollins and Hollins 1999; Kimbell 2009).

Hollins (2006) later also noted that business and management courses were including modules on managing services. This can be seen with courses such as Siad Business School, University of Oxford through the service design module they teach on their MBA course. Kimbell maintains that the term 'service design' is still not established in practice or theory, and that even service designers are not united on what it does and does not mean. Mager (2006) refers to service design as a practice that takes the needs and wants of service users to develop services, while ensuring that they are desirable, effective, efficient from a client's

perspective (Saco and Goncalves 2008). I would add profitable to this list. The use of design in this context is summed up by Raymond Turner: “Design acts as an interface between company and customer, ensuring the company delivers what the customer wants in a way that adds value to both” (B Hollins and Shinkins 2006:7).

As referred to above, a consistent and defining feature of service design is the human-centered approach. This approach has in the past been used for designing artefacts, but within the specialism of service design, this approach produces information on how and why services are being used (Kimbell 2009).

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, three companies lead the way in developing the practice of service design: live|work (Lovlie, Downs and Reason), IDEO (Moggridge) and Engine (J Heapy and Parker) To promote its use, their work has been used by the Design Council as case studies on service design, and the co-design methods it uses, published in the *Design Council Magazine* between 2006 - 2009.

When service design emerged, the majority of design agencies were based within the private sector (Hollins 2006). A manifesto called *Journey to the Interface*, published by Demos and co-authored by Heapy, a founding director of Engine (Parker and Heapy 2006), was one of the first publications that explored and demonstrated the use of service design within the public sector. It argued that designers' user-centred approach to service design, among other qualities, placed them in a strong position to tackle social challenges. This resonates with Nussbaum (2005) in *Business Week* online:

It's great that design can solve social as well as economic problems. They (designers) took the methodology of product design and applied it to services. Now they are moving beyond that to systemizing design methodologies for all kinds of arenas, including social problems. What better way to deal with the health care crisis than to use design?

Due to the extensive programme of public service reform and the political agendas around choice, voice and participation under New Labour (Great Britain 2005a), there were more opportunities for designers to be involved in reform or redesign of public services (Richard 2008b ; Julier and Moor 2009; Kimbell 2009). Funding increased to raise standards, reduce inequalities and increase responsiveness to users (Great Britain 2008b ; Varney 2006). Designing services around the user (rather than making the patient fit into the existing service) and personalised care became key ways of thinking (Maher 2007 ; Thomas 2008). In the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills' publication, *The Whitehall Innovation Hub*, Lord Drayson (then the Minister of State for Science and Innovation) wrote: “The next phase of public sector reform is all about innovation at the frontline: new ideas to improve hospital care;

bold solutions for local transport; fresh approaches to personalized education and training” (2008d:2).

Although service design was being explored within the context of service reform from 2006, the *Design Council Magazine* did not start mentioning public service design until the summer of 2008, in their fourth issue. *Can We Deliver Better Public Services for Less Money?* is a transcript of a virtual discussion between leading design and social policy thinkers on how nations no longer compete on their labour costs or IT advances, but also on the “quality and affordability of the health and transport solutions they provide to citizens” (Design Council 2008a:16).

Before talking about service design publicly, the Design Council was supporting ‘transformation design’ (C. Burns et al. 2006 ; Cottam and Leadbeater 2004), defined as “new thinking and practical design solutions in the form of systems, services and products. [The] approach is human centred, involving users, business and service providers in the design process [to] explore a wide range of [social] issues” (Cottam and Leadbeater 2004:1).

There is little to distinguish transformation design from design thinking and service design, apart from that it is practiced exclusively in the context of social sustainability, and can include a range of solutions that are not just service based. In fact, the term ‘transformation design’ was never used outside the Design Council (Burns et al. 2006).

The term social design is also rarely referred to, except by design agencies Thinkpublic and Uscreates. These agencies describe their work as social design or social innovation. The notion of social design is not new, just rediscovered with the last decade’s interest in using user-centred and systemic design practices to address social challenges. Papanek (1984) most famously wrote about social design in *Design for the Real World*.

Social design and the user centred methods, which often accompany it, were being practiced and researched by a number of practitioners and academics during the 1960s and 70s. Papanek was only one of the designers whose work focused on this subject. Buckminster Fuller inaugurated the World Design Science Decade (1965 to 1975), which was devoted to applying the principles of science and design to solving the problems of humanity. Tomás Maldonado and Gui Bonsiepe, who both studied at the Ulm School of Design in Germany in the 1960s before working in the UK, passed on its position that designers must stop focusing primarily on the artistic point of view of the profession and look to the ergonomics and the usability of the outcome (Ulm School of Design 2012).

John Chris Jones, a Welsh designer also promoted ergonomics and the user centred issues in industrial design and specifically within the design process. *Design Methods* was published by Jones in 1970 and it questioned the aims, goals and purpose of designing which stemmed from

his belief that design failed to balance individual, societal or ecological needs, which often resulted in the production of objects that the general user did not like, and which did not adapt to the social environment. Not only did Jones place an emphasis on the user within design, he also began exploring an early version of participatory design in *Designing by Committee* (Jones 1992:36). The pros and cons of making design decisions by committee are discussed from the likelihood of failure if the committee is not skilled enough, to the success it could have if all committee members are aware of each other, and have a common goal.

Chapter 3 of his book looks in more detail at the different varieties of participatory and co-design from the 1960s to the modern day.

The co-design methodology is central to social design and innovation, as Green also recognises:

To be meaningful, social innovation has to engage with the different stakeholders from the beginning through a collaborative and co-creative process, given that the ultimate relevancy and success is dependent on their experience and their participation, especially of the users, themselves (Green 2007:33).

Much has been written on social innovation by The Young Foundation (a social innovation think and 'do' tank) together with NESTA, and the "spectacular examples of public sector innovation in recent times" (B. Rogers 2011) which include: child trust funds, London's congestion charge and direct payments for social care users, the challenges social innovation faces, whether innovation should be the job of specialised units or everyone (Muglan 2007b), and how innovation can be accelerated (Muglan 2007c).

Despite this interest in public sector service design and social innovation, and the collaborative, user-centred methods it employs, no literature was found on why these had become new specialisms, and how the public sector became aware of them. The majority of publications focus on the current processes and uses of service design, and its future direction, for example *Innovation By Design In Public Services* (Thomas 2008), in which there are articles looking at the obstacles and barriers to public sector innovation (Bichard 2008b), how the NHS is starting to think in innovative ways (Maher and Baxter), the transformation of public services (Thackara 2007), and design's role in public sector innovation (Thomas 2008). These articles provide a good overview of types of research and discussions currently carried out on service design.

1.1.9 Teaching co-design

There is much talk about the paradigm shift that we are currently experiencing (Siodmok 2011 ; D.E. Williams 2007) in moving from the industrial revolution to a service and systems based

economy. This has a bearing on design education and the role that designers find themselves fulfilling. Pascal Raabe asks a very important and relevant question through his blog:

If design schools are preparing students for a future that is defined by collaboration, interdisciplinary, participation and most of all constant change — values that students are in fact dealing with on a daily basis outside university — what is the role of formal design education? (Raabe 2010)

The Cox Review focused on how the UK could compete with emerging economies and recommended the setting up of “centres of excellence . . . that specialise in multi-disciplinary programmes encompassing both postgraduate teaching and research” (Cox 2005:2). These centres would combine creativity, technology and business, encouraging a range of students from different disciplines to work together. A number of universities took up the challenge and the results are documented through case studies in *Multi-disciplinary Design Education in the UK* (Design Council 2010). The case studies demonstrate the rise of service design thinking and practice, however all the examples come from the commercial sector.

Advocacy of a more collaborative and sustainable approach to design education has been practiced and documented elsewhere. Papanek observed “the main trouble with design schools seems to be that they teach too much design and not enough about the ecological, social, economic and political environment in which design takes place” (1984:291). One answer has been the *Designers Accord*, a global coalition of designers, educators, and business leaders working together to create positive environmental and social impact. In October 2009, they held a conference to discuss the topic of design education and sustainability. Over 100 ‘progressive individuals’ attended to address a set of questions including:

- How can we continue to move design education forward?
- How can we design a sustainability curriculum?
- How can we update existing design programmes?
- How can we help design students work in more meaningful ways?

(Designers Accord 2011)

The conversations around these question resulted in an understanding that designers now require a “deeper personal, social and cultural connection to their work” (Designers Accord 2011), and that design education will have to restructure its methods and processes to provide students with these skills.

As a result of the conference, it is the opinion of the Designers' Accord that “sustainability needs to be integrated as a critical lens in design, not to be considered as an extra-curricular concern,

or as an elective” (Designers Accord 2011). Good design practice will need to be sustainable design practice in the future.

1.1.10 Ethics of co-design

In 1989 a research project on design ethics and the responsibility of designers was carried out in the School of Design at the University of Montreal (Findeli). The researchers thought that the existing codes of conduct for designers were no longer suitable for design practice. The research reached a number of conclusions:

- In order to be able to define professional responsibility (i.e., not only competence), a discussion on the **purpose** of design is necessary.
- Priority should be given to the reform of design **education**.
- There can be no responsible design without a responsible designer, i.e. education should be directed to the development of an **individualistic ethics**. (Findeli 1994:16)

‘Individualistic ethics’ can be taken as contradiction in terms, but as Marvin Brown (1989) points out in *Issues in Ethics* journal, there are two approaches to ethics, the ‘individualistic approach’ and the ‘communal approach’. In this sense, ‘individualistic ethics’ is about individuals being morally responsible for their own behaviour.

There is little written explicitly on the ethics of co-design (Cook and Harrington 2010), and “no coherent blueprint exists for design as an ethical and commercial practice” (Fry 2008). However publications have been produced on ethics in nearly every discipline of design: architecture and urban design (Fisher 2008 ; Golany 1995), engineering (Lowe 2003), graphics (Roberts 2007) product (Parsons 2009). For example, T.H Russ (2009) reviews current design methods and practices, and the values and ethics that ‘guide’ them. He rethinks ethical guidance in terms of designing for sustainable development.

For information and research on the ethics of working collaboratively, it is necessary to look at another discipline, social research (Babbie 2010; Mertens and Ginsberg 2009) and its participatory fieldwork (Laine 2000). There is also a wealth of information surrounding the ethics of the internet as a collaborative social communication medium (Grinyer 2007 ; Hudson and Bruckman 2004 ; Nosek, Banaji and Greenwald 2002). The *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society* has published a range of articles over the last decade that also predominantly focus on emerging communication technologies, such as: *Ethics Among Peers: File Sharing on the Internet Between Openness And Precaution* (Pagallo 2010), *Archiving the Self? Facebook as Biography of Social and Relational Memory* (Richardson and Hessey 2009), and *Regulating the Future? Law, Ethics, and Emerging Technologies* (Szekely, Szabo and Vissy 2011).

1.2 Social sustainability

The concept of 'sustainable development' had been gaining momentum since 1972, when the United Nations held the *Conference on the Human Environment* in Stockholm (Pepper 1996). However it was during the 1980s that the concept gained prominence, not only in the academic world, which initiated research into the environmental impact of industrial activities such as air pollution and toxic waste (Rogers, Jalal and Boyd 2008), but also among the general public. This was in part due to the publication of *Our Common Future* in 1987 (also known as the *Brundtland Report*). This suggested that sustainable development was not only about addressing environmental sustainability but that economic and social considerations formed part of sustainable development as well.

Most still look to the Brundtland Report for a definition of sustainability: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". This definition was widely interpreted as addressing environmental needs. Although this is still the most common field to discuss sustainable development, the last twelve years has witnessed a growing emphasis on social sustainability; the focus of this investigation.

The social emphasis increased during the 1980's as the idea of nature conservation grew in popularity (Rogers, Jalal and Boyd 2008). According to Rogers, Jalal and Boyd, this was the initial step in introducing the social dimension to sustainability, as people began to question their role in the condition of the natural environment. The realisation that people were becoming poorer due to over exploitation of natural resources, and the adverse effects of pollution, was the catalyst to giving greater importance to social concerns.

According to Richards in *Stumbling toward Sustainability* it was *Agenda 21* and the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, both of which came out of the 1992 Earth Summit, that 'put a human face on sustainable development'. Within Agenda 21 there is a section dedicated to the social and economic dimensions of sustainability, which includes chapters on *combating poverty* and *protecting and promoting human health conditions*.

1.2.1 Defining social sustainability

While a number of texts have discussed social sustainability as a component of sustainable development (Blewitt 2008 ; Edwards 2005 ; Pepper 1996) and many have discussed single aspects of it (welfare, education, housing provision, health improvement, community cohesion) there are only a handful of publications which focus exclusively on the topic in a holistic sense.

Polese and Stren (2000) write about the extreme social divisions characterising many cities, and the challenge of creating socially cohesive and inclusive communities. Ukaga, Maser and Reichenbach (2010) explore the human-related aspects of sustainable development, and how we must deal with individual behaviour in a systematic way, rather than dealing with the

outcomes of it in a symptomatic way. Manzi, Lucas and Lloyd-Jones (2010) explore social sustainability within the context of urban planning in developed countries, and how sustainable societies can be guaranteed for current and future generations. However as the authors point out, they only deal with certain elements of social sustainability, excluding “issues of welfare, employment provision and governance”, as it was not felt that these were of direct importance to urban planning. Instead the work focuses on creating more self-reliant communities by building social capital, and how new developments can stimulate social sustainability in the future.

As for a definition of social sustainability, Manzi, Lucas and Lloyd-Jones (2010) acknowledge that it is unclear despite the wealth of knowledge surrounding sustainable development. Littig and Griessler (2005) believe that this is “due to the fact that there is no clear differentiation between the analytical, normative, and political aspects [of social sustainability] and that people may prioritise one over another. One reason for this problem can already be found in the broad and multi-faceted connotation of the word 'social', which has an analytical as well as a normative meaning” (Littig and Griessler 2005:69).

There is consensus among researchers that the environmental, social and economic are all interlinked and that all three have to be considered in achieving long term change. However there is no discussion of how this change should be achieved. Polese and Stren (2000) argue that social sustainability can be achieved through democratic approaches to policy reform, having analysed attempts by ten European cities to create environments for a diverse range of communities. Within their work, there is a focus on urban infrastructure in creating social sustainability.

The only literature found which considered the topic in a holistic way was *Understanding the social dimension of sustainability*, edited by Dillard, Dujon and King (2009). The contributing authors came from sociology, economics, business administration, public administration, public health, geography, education and natural resource management. Like Manzi, Lucas and Lloyd-Jones, Dillard, Dujon and King agree that there is no consensus on a definition of social sustainability, but they call attention to what they refer to as a ‘satisfactory definition’ that they find in Harris and Goodwin:

A socially sustainable system must achieve fairness in distribution and opportunity, adequate provision of social services, including health and education, gender equity, and political accountability and participation (2009:3).

Like Harris and Goodwin, Edwards (2005) refers to similar components in social sustainability, and also attempts to classify them according to scale in *The Sustainability Revolution: Portrait of a Paradigm Shift*. At a local level, transportation, employment, housing, education and

healthcare provision are included, as well as the arts. At regional level, the impact of other communities and economic development are mentioned. At national level, government policies regarding healthcare, food and energy are considered important. In the light of this thesis, the distinction of the social components of sustainability at the different societal scales is useful, as the majority of work using co-design is occurring at the local level. The one key aspect of social sustainability that Harris and Goodwin identify, but Edwards does not, is community participation. Co-design centres on participation and it is a vital method for obtaining greater social sustainability.

1.2.2 Engagement, participation and collaboration in social sustainability

Skidmore, Bound and Lownsborough (2007) give three reasons for participative governance, which extend to the practice of co-design:

- It leads to better, more responsive services. Services are more tailored to the needs of individuals, and are quicker to respond to changes in those needs.
- It tackles disengagement from politics and democracy. Along with democratic renewal, participation enhances trust in and positive engagements with services.
- It builds social capital. (qtd in Bradwell and Marr 2008:14)

Participation is used to ensure a democratic approach to social sustainability and to create a democratic society (Hind 2010). Dillard, Dujon and King say “socially sustainable communities are equitable, diverse, connected and democratic and provide a good quality of life” (2009:18), and that social sustainability is one of the four emergent principles that Magis and Shinn identify through a review of current literature surrounding “human wellbeing, equality, democratic government and democratic society” (2009:285). Warbuton recognises that in order to support and build the resources needed for sustainable development, citizens have to be involved in the decisions and activities that affect their lives and the environment they live in. Again this resonates with the thesis, as it explores the use of a democratic method to address social challenges with the aim of improving human wellbeing, under New Labour who were determined to promote democratic working systems within their government.

1.2.3 Social Capital

Creation of the term *social capital* is an attempt to use the analogy of capital to understand the role of social institutions and processes in the economy, much as environmental economists have used the term *natural capital* to describe natural resources and amenities (Dillard, Dujon and King 2009:2).

Social networks have a social value that is widely referred to as 'social capital' (Coleman 1988; Halpern 2005 ; Putnam 2006). Goodland (2002) believes creating and maintaining social capital are ways to achieve social sustainability.

Halpern (2005) argues that social capital can be stimulated through investment, and highlights that many governments internationally already do this, by funding voluntary organisations, supporting volunteering, providing subsidised education, and running a legal system that disciplines anti-social behaviour. Goodland agrees, saying that investment and services create the 'basic framework for society', and that community participation in a democratic society helps to achieve this.

Goodland identifies human sustainability as a fourth area of sustainability alongside economic, environmental and social. Whereas social sustainability relies on creating and maintaining social capital, human sustainability relies on creating and maintaining human capital, which is "a private good of individuals, rather than between individuals or societies. The health, education, skills, knowledge, leadership and access to services constitute human capital" (2002:1).

1.2.4 Social sustainability in the context of New Labour

The importance of sustainability within the New Labour government emerged in 1999, when it produced a national strategy for sustainable development in the UK: *A Better Quality of Life: A Strategy for Sustainable Development in the UK* (Great Britain 1999a). The strategy provided the platform for a second paper entitled *Quality of Life Counts* (Great Britain 2000b), which listed 15 indicators of sustainable development, established by the government, to gauge society's quality of life. There are the obvious indicators like economic growth and environmental impact, but also less obvious ones like river water quality and educational qualifications.

In line with New Labour's new localism agenda, social sustainability was approached from a local, community level. Tony Blair said: "A key task for our second term is to develop greater coherence around our commitment to community" (qtd in Nash and Christie 2003 ; Pierson and Castles 2006).

The *Sustainable Communities* agenda (2006) has been much written about by scholars, but mainly in relation to urban planning and architecture. For example Manzi, Lucas and Lloyd-Jones (2010) write that the *Sustainable Communities* plan was a key strategy in implementing the findings of the report *Towards an Urban Renaissance* (Urban Task Force 1999). Manzi et al. observe that despite the *Sustainable Communities* plan having a focus on the future as well as the present, it does not actually consider how to accommodate people at the different stages of their lives.

The concept of sustainable communities was last promoted by New Labour in *Real People, Real Power* (Great Britain 2008c), which encourages people to take an active role in their communities and to become more involved in key local public services.

1.3 New Labour's social and innovative agendas

1.3.1 Engagement, participation and collaboration under New Labour

New Labour's commitment to public participation built upon previous governments' public policy and management, notably John Major's *Citizen's Charter*, which focused on the responsiveness and standards of public services by making administration accountable and citizen friendly and adopting a stakeholder approach (Barnett 2002 ; Newman 2001).

The 1990s saw the notion of citizen involvement as a method of enhancing service delivery and increasing public involvement in decision-making (Barnes 1997). Much effort and creativity was put into developing methods for participation such as resident forums, stakeholder workshops and visioning exercises (Stoker 2006). Labour built on this democratic approach to governance, and Newman (2001) believes this may have been due to a desire to transfer accountability from the public sector to citizens, rather than develop better engagement of the public for co-governance. Today, the same is being said of the coalition's Big Society agenda (Gruhn 2010).

Newman (2001) discusses 'democratic innovation' and 'public participation' in *Modernising Governance: New Labour, Policy and Society* and states that government organisations need to be more open and responsive to the people they serve, and this will aid solutions to social challenge. Newman uses an extract from Blair to demonstrate this point – "diverse democratic debate is a laboratory for ideas about how we should meet social needs"(2001:17).

Public participation and democratic innovation lead to questions about where the power truly lies within the decision making process within the public sector (Arnstein 1969 ; Involve 2005; Newman 2001), and to discussions on the rules of engagement (Involve 2008) and the boundaries of politics (Newman 2001). Another common subject is whether participatory approaches result in sustainable and innovative outcomes (Caddy 2005 ; Great Britain 2008b). In a review of a European Union management system, Heinelt and Smith (2003) suggest that innovation and participation are linked, as does Schmitter (2002), who suggests there is an 'interrelationship' between the two. As Heinelt and Smith point out, the people who need, or will ultimately use an innovation, have the relevant knowledge to ensure it is a success.

The vision of citizen participation was communicated through many government publications, including *Community Engagement: Some Lessons from the New Deal For Communities Programme* (Great Britain 2008a) which aimed to develop self-help and capacity building within communities, *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* (Great Britain 2000c) and the *Urban White Paper* (Great Britain 2000e). Other papers were published that provided information on the practicalities of participation, such as *Enhancing Public Participation in Local Government* (Great Britain 1998a) and *'Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People'* (Great Britain 1998c).

Despite the promotion and encouragement of public participation and involvement, a fear of failure from trying new methods within the public sector has resulted in a lack of uptake from community-led initiatives (Foley and Martin 2000 ; Involve 2005 ; Sellick 2006).

1.3.2 Public service reform

The reform of public services was one of New Labour's promises when they came to office and became the dominant agenda during their second term (Driver and Martell 2006 ; Powell 2002). The core principles behind this were user-centred and user-led services, which started forming the government's personalisation agenda (Leadbeater 2004).

Reforming our Public Services: Putting Principles into Practice (Great Britain 2002), clearly summed up the user-centred principles from previous papers which continued to set the tone for the reformation: user choice and voice. It was envisioned that the service user, rather than central government, would become the driver behind service development (Great Britain 2002).

Within the NHS, service reform specifically focused on better integration of health services (Great Britain 1997) and introduced health improvement plans at a local level. According to MacDonald (2003), New Labour's concept of health improvement programmes was well received. In a similar vein to the user-centred focus of the broader public sector reform, participatory and collaboratively working with citizens and health professionals to improve public health was fundamental (Orme 2007). This has both strengths and weaknesses. It improves the approaches to reducing inequalities, but this raises questions regarding accountability and responsibility of the outcomes. This issue is raised on a number of occasions in the thesis.

1.3.3 Innovation

The majority of literature on innovation focuses on technological advances (Garud, Nayyar and Shapira 1997), their creation of new markets (Flichy 2007), and the benefits that they can bring within the private sector (Sloane 2007), when managed correctly (Christensen 1997 ; Deschamp 2008).

Towards the end of the 2000s, the literature shows an emphasis on low technology innovations for business growth, focussing on systems and services, as commented on by Harris and Halkett, who referred to the UK as being in the "early stages of developing an innovation policy for a service-based economy" (2007:4).

According to Chesbrough (2006) the service and system strategy was due to the "information-rich environment" that meant that innovations could no longer be developed solely within companies, relying on internal ideas and technologies. 'Open innovation' (Chesbrough 2006 ; 2011 ; Lindegaard 2010) was emerging as a method to leverage internal and external resources

to develop innovations, and find new routes to take them to market. Listening to the needs and desires of potential customers started to become common practices to ensure that the innovations could be marketed and sold (Hippel 2006).

With a focus on open innovation and working across companies, sectors and with customers, collaboration became significant (Von Stamm and Trifilova 2009). Much of the thinking and practice around open and service innovation resonated with what the public sector wanted to achieve with their service reform agenda (Great Britain 2004). As Windrum (2008) acknowledges, there is a small amount of literature on public sector innovation. Limited information can be found through reading the government policies and programmes of the time (Lane 2000).

It is through organisations such as NESTA, and the Young Foundation that one finds much of the literature surrounding public sector and social innovation. The Young Foundation in particular shifted the thinking about innovation in the public sector from being solely about services, to being about programmes and interventions to improve society (Mulgan 2007c ; 2010 ; Woodcraft 2006), most recently exploring its role in a financially restricted public sector and the 'Big Society' agenda (Mulgan 2010). Together with NESTA, Geoff Mulgan, Director of the Young Foundation, has explored ways to support and scale up social innovation (Mulgan 2007b ; NESTA 2007).

The area of collaboration and co-creation in innovation is explored by a few writers (Green 2007), however co-design is only the focus with Design Council publications and recently in Bason's (2010) *Leading Public Sector Innovation: Co-creating for a Better Society*. Bason references work and organisations which are central to this thesis, such as the NHS Institute of Innovation and Improvement's work on *Experience Based Design* and the Design Council's programmes to promote and develop user-centric and participatory approaches to social and public service challenges.

As well as recognising that co-creation is 'strongly connected' to co-design, as is design thinking, Bason notes that it has been a central method for innovation. This is also discussed by (Boland and Collopy 2004 ; T. Brown 2009a ; Kimbell 2009 ; Martin 2009). Involving all stakeholders, including communities, in the innovation process is seen as key to delivering outcomes that are relevant and successful (Green 2007). Bason highlights two key benefits of using a co-creation approach: 'divergence' and 'execution'. Divergence refers to the ideas that are produced as a result of the collaborative nature of co-creating innovation, and the insight it brings through taking a user-centred approach. Execution is the "anchoring" of a creative process with all project stakeholders, not just at the implementation stage, but in the generation and development stages as well (Bason 2010:214).

Although the book touches on the reasons for co-creation emerging as a method for public and social sector innovation, the focus is on the 'four Cs' that form a framework for an "innovation ecosystem", "consciousness, capacity, co-creation and courage" (Bason 2010:20). In general this literature is the most complementary to this research but is not central to answering the questions posed in the thesis about how and why co-design emerged under New Labour, and how was it practiced.

1.3.4 Non-departmental public sector bodies supporting innovation

Papers from non-departmental public bodies such as NESTA have provided arguments and case studies as to why innovation and creativity are needed to improve public services and address social challenges (Harris and Albury 2009). Although these do not directly mention design, the relationship between innovation, creativity and design is well established and has been referred to as the practical tool that links creativity and innovation – a discipline which shapes ideas to become practical and attractive propositions for users and customers (Cox 2005).

The Design Council has naturally written about the importance of design-led innovation and its role in addressing social challenges and the reform of public services. In the Design Council's 2008 briefing document, *The Role of Design in Public Services*, it talks about how social challenges, such as an aging population and a low carbon economy make innovation essential, especially for the public services which are at the front line in addressing the issues. The Design Council continue by stating that recent evidence (which they do not reference) shows that "design methodologies can drive innovation in public services" (2008a 1).

The Design Council has identified that design methodologies enable service innovation in five key ways: developing more personalised services; harnessing the knowledge of front line staff; managing risk by prototyping new ideas; improving efficiency and value for money; and giving service users more control. These ideas differ slightly to the research carried out for this thesis, but do provide a solid link as to why the design industry has become involved in creating public service innovation which in turn results in social sustainability.

Design is in a prime position to meet the growing need for products and services that don't just generate profits but also make minimum impact on the planet. But designers will need to think and work in new ways to move sustainability into the mainstream (Design Council 2008b:16).

In Heinelt et al. (2003) *Achieving Sustainable and Innovative Policies Through Participatory Governance in a Multi-Level Context*, they maintain there is a link between participation, sustainability and innovation. This is also alluded to in *Innovation Nation*, published by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills as a vision of a new strategy to make Britain

a place to house innovation across all sectors; private, third and public (Great Britain 2008b).

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A number of different research methodologies were available to conduct this research. They were all qualitative, rather than quantitative, because the research involved understanding how and why co-design methodology had occurred, rather than measuring its use or effectiveness. Qualitative research requires understanding what knowledge already exists in the topic area, analysing the theoretical implications of what is discovered and explaining how this understanding is reached (Traynor 2007).

There are many methods available to 'gain insight' (Traynor 2007): semi-structured interviews, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, ethnography, participatory action research, text analysis. I chose semi-structured interviews over focus groups to allow for richer, more in-depth discussion one-on-one that could then be used in subsequent interviews in the same way a focus group permits, but without the management of participants who can dominate the discussion and prevent some from airing their views.

An ethnographic approach to data collection was also used, rather than an action research approach (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006) such as a Cooperative Inquiry (Heron 1996). In action research one develops and carries out research with participants rather than conducting the research on them. Putting together a research steering group of key people (such as those I interviewed) to investigate and create theories was considered to be problematic for the same reasons as the focus groups. In addition, my analysis might have been influenced by the numbers, seniority, and agendas of participants from different industries / backgrounds (i.e. designers and non-departmental government bodies), rather than remaining as objective as possible.

2.1 outlines the methodology framework chosen, and the specific tools and processes used to gather data.

2.1 Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967)

Without a clear hypothesis for the emergence of co-design under New Labour, a 'Grounded Theory' approach was considered most suitable (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Grounded Theory generates theory from collecting empirical data, and preformed hypotheses are prohibited according to Glaser and Strauss. This approach was most relevant as I had no hypothesis, but knew it was possible to develop one through exploring the subject area.

To formulate a theory, a combination of analysis of empirical data and examination of practice-based work within the field of co-design were used. Information was gathered through a literature review, semi-structured interviews with knowledgeable people in the field of design

and social policy, through field observation of work being done by Uscreates, and other design agencies, and by collecting case study.

The overall methodology for this thesis was only partially based on Glaser and Strauss' Grounded Theory, however, as I carried out the following activities, which it does not include:

Pre-research literature review

In Grounded Theory, a literature review is considered to give preconceptions about what the researcher may find, and reduces their ability to recognise new concepts and ideas. It is suggested that literature is read once all the empirical data is gathered and thoughts are beginning to form. Reviewing literature before gathering empirical data was a fundamental first stage for this work to establish that the Ph.D would be an original contribution to knowledge. As it was, Grounded Theory was then used to build an understanding of the topic area empirically – through interviews, observations in the field, and first-hand experience.

Recording and transcribing

In Grounded Theory, the act of recording and transcribing interviews should be kept to a minimum (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Instead, data are recorded through field-notes, a form of commentary, from which ideas/hypotheses are generated. However, as my research took place over a number of years, the early interviews were recorded and transcribed in detail, to ensure I documented all information accurately for use during the write-up of the thesis. As my ideas became more developed, it was not necessary to continue in this way, as many of the interviews became about triangulation, verifying ideas and information provided by previous interviewees.

2.2 Pre-research literature review

To establish that my Ph.D was an original contribution to knowledge and to explore the emergence and practice of co-design I examined secondary research through a literature review (Hart 1998). The relevant literature was identified through a systematic search of government chronicles⁹, design journals¹⁰ and magazines¹¹ held in libraries, and through the bibliographies of relevant texts. The following key areas were covered:

- Co-design: user-centered design, participatory design, design thinking
- Social sustainability: New Labour's agendas, environmentalism, social welfare
- New Labour: Tony Blair, social and engagement policy, design and innovation agendas
- Public engagement: New Labour's agendas, community cohesion, participation
- Innovation: social innovation, public sector innovation, supporting innovation

⁹ For example the *Journal of Local Government Studies*.

¹⁰ For example *Design Principles and Practices* and the *International Journal of Design*.

¹¹ For example *Rotman Magazine* and *Design Week*.

In addition it was necessary to review in more general terms, service design, social capital and social networks, and the wider field of New Labour's quest for social sustainability.

2.3 Mapping

The knowledge and information gathered from the literature review resulted in the mapping of events, agendas, and key decisions during the emergence of co-design practice. Original documents were sought over the comment and debate that came later. In addition reference material was chosen that related specifically to the British political scene and British design evolution.

The resulting map charts events that were felt to have influenced the emergence and practice of co-design for social sustainability under New Labour, but alone it could not help in drawing conclusions. Through completing the literature review and creating a historical map, it became apparent that little had been written about co-design as a method or its emergence and practice under New Labour. In contrast a wealth of information was found on the emergence and promotion of social sustainability, innovation and participation under New Labour, with which co-design is connected. All three of these areas were clearly documented through government white papers, green papers and publications, and commented on by researchers in the form of academic papers, books and media articles.

2.4 Defining the research questions

The collected information from the literature review generated a series of research questions to be explored through the interviews, field observations and case studies:

- How did co-design emerge?
- Why did co-design emerge?
- Who led the emergence?
- Who was/is commissioning co-design?
- What was/is co-design being commissioned for?
- What are the deliverables of co-design?
- What makes designers proficient in practicing co-design?

2.5 Semi-structured interviews (Robson 1993)

Twenty-five interviewees were chosen for their involvement in some capacity in the emergence of co-design. For the initial interviews, this involvement was established through my professional networks at Uscreates, from hearing people speak at conferences and from the literature being reviewed. As is common with interviews in a Grounded Theory approach, the analysis of the initial interviews informed the choice of who to interview next and what questions to ask.

Through the interviews, the same people or organisations were often referred to when recounting events or information. When a person was named and further investigation revealed an interview with them would benefit the research, one was conducted. Where an organisation was mentioned the most relevant, senior person was approached first for an interview. On the one occasion that a request for an interview was declined, an alternative person, deemed knowledgeable enough on the topic, was suggested and interviewed.

There were a handful of names with whom an interview was not deemed necessary, as their role was very specific. For example, John Sorrell who sat on the *Creative Pioneer Programme* board, which features majorly in this thesis, was not interviewed as his work away from the board was not specifically linked to co-design. Another board member, Michael Bichard, also Chair of the Design Council from 2008 to 2011, was interviewed instead.

The interviewees are grouped in the following categories:

- Designers practicing co-design for social sustainability (company directors and experienced freelancers):
 - Ella Britton – Designer, Thinkpublic
 - Chris Downs – Co-founder, Live|Work
 - Jo Harrington – Freelance service designer
 - Joe Heapy – Co-founder, Engine
 - Ben Reason – Co-founder, Live|Work
 - Jaimes Nel – Insight designer, Live|Work
 - Emma Southgate – Designer, Participle
 - Zoe Stanton – Co-founder, Uscreates
 - Deborah Szebeko – Founder, Thinkpublic
- Senior professionals commissioning and promoting co-design (i.e. in organisations such as the Design Council, NHS Institute of Innovation and Improvement, NESTA, Young Foundation):
 - Michael Bichard – Chair of Design Council (2008 – 2011)
 - Emily Campbell – Director of Design, Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce
 - Alice Casey – Neighbourhood Challenge Programme Lead, NESTA
 - Tamsin Fulton – Partnership Manager, *Public Services by Design*, Design Council
 - Mat Hunter – Chief Design Officer, Design Council
 - Dr Su Maddock – Director of the Whitehall Innovation Hub
 - Lynne Maher - Interim Director, Innovation, NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement

- Sian Prime – Content Manager, Creative Pioneer Programme, NESTA (2004-2006)
 - Joop Tanis – Head of Health Launchpad Programme, Young Foundation
 - John Thackara – Programme Director, DOTT 07
 - Emily Thomas - Programme Lead, *Public Services by Design*, Design Council
- Senior professionals working in engagement, education, social sustainability, social innovation and social policy:
 - Katy Cooper – Senior Project Manager at the Oxford Health Alliance
 - Dr Michelle Harrison – CEO of TNS BMRB
 - Jo Hillier – Head of Social Action, Conservative Party
 - Patrick Ladbury – Programme Manager, National Social Marketing Centre
 - Matt Ward – Programme Leader, BA Design, Goldsmiths College

Due to the mass of information produced by New Labour regarding their social sustainability, engagement and innovations agendas, it was felt that no further information was needed, or would be obtained by interviewing senior civil servants.

The majority of interviews were conducted face-to-face, with a small number over the phone, and each lasted approximately one hour. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed them to flow and for non-prescribed information to be gathered. The format of the interviews consisted of:

- background information gathering on the interviewee (training and career to date)
- specific questions related to their area of knowledge
- comparison of interview information with that gathered from other interviews
- feedback on the hypotheses being generated as a result of previous interviews

Because of the lack of published material on this subject area, triangulation was an important aspect of the research, as it was often the only means of verifying the data being collected, it was also useful in addressing another difficulty in interviews in which one is trying to piece together the past: interviewees' memories.

2.6 Ethnographic research (Agar 1996)

Over the last six years I have been one of those designers developing the practice of co-design, have been on the receiving end of the public sector work for socially sustainable projects, and have observed how the practice of co-design has emerged and developed. This first-hand experience has provided a wealth of information for the research, and is 'ethnographic' in the sense that it studies a specific kind of culture: a section of the contemporary design culture in the UK. Ethnography is most widely defined as the study of people and their cultures, and it developed as practice within anthropology (Geertz 1973). However the use of the term and its

meanings can vary, resulting in 'fuzzy semantic boundaries' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007:1), and its application over a range of different disciplines. One constant of the ethnographic method, however, is personal observation and participation of the context of the subject area, and this my research adheres to (Reilly 2005).

There are disadvantages to being so closely linked with the research area, and it was essential to distance myself from my own personal and professional biases and to see other points of view and positions, to separate, in other words, my role as a PhD candidate from my role as a practitioner as much as possible. I sought to achieve this by reducing my working week to 4 days in order to have one day each week dedicated entirely to PhD research without distraction and influence from Uscreates.

2.7 Case Studies (Yin 1994)

The semi-structured interviews and analysis of practice-based work were expanded on through ten 'explanatory case studies' (Yin 1994). These were of recent projects (2005 – 2010), and were used to demonstrate the practice of co-design under New Labour. They were compiled from more detailed interviews specifically with designers and public sector commissioners, publications that featured the project work, and existing information on design agency websites. My own agency, Uscreates, is included, as it has informed the development of co-design in this context.

2.8 Creating a hypothesis

Data collected from the above methods were analysed and added to the map of events and agendas identified through the literature review. The analysis framework identified the information that had been uncovered in one of five categories:

- Co-design: user-centered design, participatory design, design thinking
- Social sustainability: New Labour's agendas, environmentalism, social welfare
- New Labour: Tony Blair, social and engagement policy, design and innovation agendas
- Public engagement: New Labour's agendas, community cohesion, participation
- Innovation: social innovation, public sector innovation, supporting innovation

Data from the transcribed interviews were coded under the above topics and added to the map. Glaser refers to this activity as 'theoretical memo-ing' – 'the core stage of the Grounded Theory method'.

The map became an important tool to refine and document ideas that developed as a result of the empirical research. As the foundations of the map were rooted in factual information gathered from numerous government publications, new empirical information could be overlaid, helping to fill in gaps and verify previous entries. Using the map in this way, transformed it into a

bank of ideas about the emergence and practice of co-design under New Labour and beyond, and how these ideas related to each other.

2.9 Objectivity

As demonstrated above, a hybrid research method (Robson 1993) was used combining literature reviews (Hart 1998), case study reviews (Yin 1994), observational field research and semi-structured interviews (Robson 1993). As this was qualitative research, developed through observation and the interpretation of events, the collection of information was relatively unstructured. Strategies to increase the objectivity of the research include a comprehensive review of all relevant literature, triangulation of interviewees' responses, and a conscious effort to separate my research from my professional role.

To limit the subjectivity of the research, my explanation of the emergence of co-design for social sustainability under New Labour was presented to peers for feedback during the final two years of the research. This took place through workshops (Stanton and Cook 2009), a conference presentation (Cook 2010b), and through conversations at events with relevant stakeholders¹².

¹² Such as DOTT's *Inspired at Bedruthan Think Tank* (26th March 2010), NESTA's *Prototyping Learning Workshop* (20th January 2011).

SECTION 1
THE EMERGENCE OF CO-DESIGN AS A METHOD FOR PROMOTING SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY
UNDER NEW LABOUR

CHAPTER 3

CO-DESIGN

3.1 Defining co-design

Co-design:

- *A set of tools used by designers to engage non-designers by asking, listening, learning, communicating and creating solutions collaboratively*
- *A community centred methodology that designers use to enable people who will be served by a designed outcome to participate in designing solutions to their problems*
- *A way to design a solution for a community with that community*
- *The process of designing with people that will use or deliver a product or service*
- *A partnership between designer, client and the wider community on a design project*
- *Collaboration on a design project between client, end-user, deliverer and designer*
- *The shift of design power from the client, via the designer, to the end-user*
- *Collective thinking and designing that addresses a community's issues*
- *Products or services that have been developed by the people who will use them in partnership with a designer*
- *Democratic design: A designer facilitating outcomes instigated by a community*
- *Research based design: A designer taking decisions and delivering solutions based on ideas / feedback from a community*

(Design Council. "Design Glossary" 2010)

In 2010 the Design Council held a virtual discussion with designers from a range of disciplines on what co-design is and how it can be defined. There were approximately 100 responses to the questionnaire on their website, from which the Design Council formulated the above working definitions. The exercise demonstrated that co-design is not yet fully understood or defined. To summarise the variety of definitions above, co-design is a method that designers use to work with the people they are designing for. Co-design is a democratic approach that is focused on processes and procedures of design. It collaboratively engages, consults and develops solutions to problems. Co-design is not a design style.

Co-design is a method being used within the private and public sector to create innovative products, services, and solutions to a range of challenges, by drawing on the expertise of the people who will ultimately be using the outcome. This thesis focuses on how this collaborative and democratic approach to designing has emerged in the public and voluntary sector as a method to create innovative ideas that support the goal of social sustainability. It also looks at

how it is currently practiced, in terms of who is commissioning it and what are the delivered outcomes.

Naturally with a method that is still evolving, co-design is often wrongly referred to in theory and practice, with many designers claiming to practice co-design when in fact they are simply gathering user feedback. There is further disagreement within the design industry over co-design. For some it demonstrates user empowerment and democratisation, for others it is an ad hoc way of designers shedding their responsibility over the outcome's success.

No doubt participants reflect on their past collaborative experiences and try to improve current situations, but they lack a framework within which to locate problems and possibilities (Poggenpohl and Sato 2009:137).

Design has no particular collaborative process – collaboration is ad hoc. This lack of understanding and structure is detrimental to design collaboration (Poggenpohl and Sato 2009:138).

The practice of co-design both rejects and accepts this statement. Co-design *is* a specific collaborative method for design, yet the process can be ad hoc. However the lack of structure does not mean that it is detrimental to collaboration. In reality it means that designers can be flexible in their work and adapt to the complex social challenges that they are addressing.

This chapter attempts to understand co-design more fully by reviewing similar collaborative techniques that have preceded the method, or those which are building upon the practice within the social sustainability arena.

3.2 'Participatory design', 'user-led design', 'user-centred design', 'co-creation', and 'co-production'

There are many terms to describe a more collaborative way of designing. These include 'participatory' design, 'user-led'/'user-centred', 'co-creation' and 'co-production'. There have been attempts to differentiate between these processes. For example a participatory design approach places the user as a *partner* in the design process, whereas user-led and user-centred design places the user as the *subject*. The diagram below maps the landscape of the different methods of collaborative design and the role that the user plays.

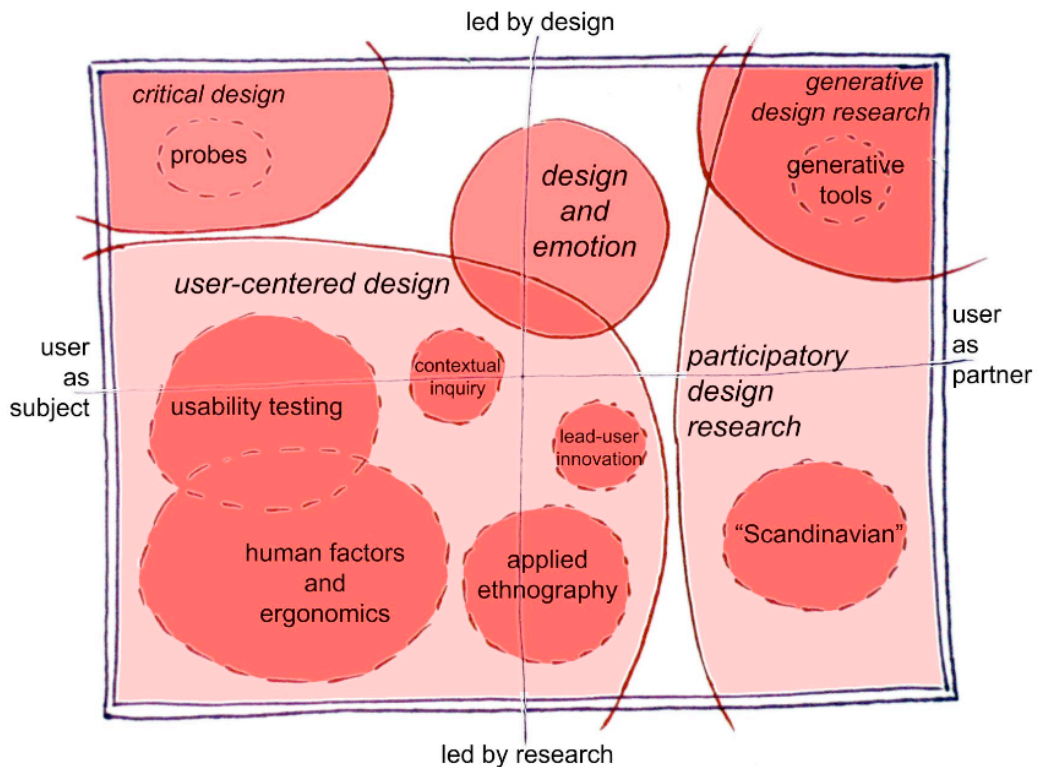


Figure 2. “The current landscape of human-centred design research as practiced in the design and development of products and services” (Sanders 2008).

3.2.1 Participatory design

Participatory design is the best-known and oldest approach to designing with people (whether these are the clients, the end users or the general public) who are considered as a ‘partners’ rather than ‘subjects’. It first emerged as a concept in the 1960s, when many felt that they were not being planned ‘for’ but planned ‘at’ in terms of the built environment (Nichols 2009). This inclusive approach developed into the practice of ‘community architecture’, which re-emerged in the early 1980s, as a number of pioneering architects began to find new ways of working with the public, helping them develop ideas for their own homes and community facilities (Towers 1995).

The term ‘participatory design’ expanded to be used in a range of fields such as graphic design and software design. However, like co-design, it is most often used and referred to in a social setting, unlike user-centered and user-led design which are mainly used in the commercial sector, although both have become more prominent in the social sector over the last decade.

In the 1970s the first Patient Participation Group was set up by Dr Peter Pritchard in his Berinsfield practice, near Oxford, as were Community Health Councils, and as Involve¹³ points

¹³ Involve is a charity funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust that carries out research and training in public engagement and participation.

out, 'never before has patient and public involvement been such a political and policy priority' (Involve 2005). In 1971 a conference entitled *Design Participation*, held by the Design Research Society in Manchester, heard papers from a range of contributors (from design, architecture, design research):

“...professional designers in every field have failed in their assumed responsibility to predict and to design-out the adverse effects of their projects. These harmful side effects can no longer be tolerated and regarded as inevitable if we are to survive the future....There is certainly a need for new approaches to design if we are to arrest the escalating problems of the man-made world and citizen participation in decision making could possibly provide a necessary re-orientation. Hence this conference theme of “user participation in design” (Cross 1971:11).

This paragraph demonstrates how difficult it is to distinguish between the different design approaches. If ‘user participation in design’ were replaced by ‘co-design’ in the above paragraph, it would be highly relevant today. As a designer stated during the Design Council’s virtual discussion on co-design, referred to at the beginning of the chapter, the practice is an updated term for participatory design. It involves designers working in collaboration with interested stakeholders in the design development process (Design Council. "Design Glossary" 2010).

The tools and methods used in a participatory design process differ from those which non-designers use. When participation is used as a way to consult with or involve people (but not involve them in design or development of ideas) the most common methods are focus groups, citizens’ juries, public meetings, and 'Planning for Real' workshops (Involve 2005:5). These methods have been extensively used by the public sector in the last decade to the extent that some communities have been said to suffer from ‘consultation fatigue’:

We need to be bolder and more imaginative, finding better ways of creating real dialogue and Involving people in the decisions that change their lives. Innovative methods of public involvement will play a vital role in making this happen (Involve 2007 4).

As Involve points out, badly practiced participation is damaging. It creates mistrust, wastes participants’ time and money, and can sour future attempts at public engagement. When design is used in public participation, these risks are lessened because the participation is ‘designed’. Designers think about the experience that the participating public will be going through and make taking part desirable. In this sense, it is possible to see the similarities between more traditional design disciplines that focus on making a product desirable through

aesthetics and styling, and newer ones that make a participatory design process more attractive and enticing.

3.2.2 User-centred design

User-centered design is a process that aims to understand the needs, wants, motivations and limitations of end users of a product or service, and to use this knowledge at each stage of the design process. According to Sanders and Stappers (2008), it has been primarily a US-driven phenomenon that started in the 1970s with consumers being given more opportunities to participate in informing and generating ideas in the early design phases. However it was in the 1980s that it really took effect, with design firms such as IDEO starting to borrow from the social sciences (anthropology, sociology and psychology) in order to gain better understanding and perspective on the people they were designing for, thereby ensuring that the product best met the needs of the user. According to Mat Hunter, Chief Design Officer at the Design Council, it was through this mixing of design with social science, and through listening to the end user of a designed product or service, that 'user-centred' design evolved (Hunter 2011b).

Sanders, who trained in psychology and anthropology and worked with design agencies in the 1980s, experienced this first hand:

My role was to know the user and to translate that knowing into principles and prescriptions that the designers with whom I worked could understand and use. We called this the user-centered design process (J Frascara 2004:1).

In the USA, this was referred to as 'Human Factors'. Jane Fulton Suri was the first Human Factors employee, hired by IDEO in 1989 (which only existed in America at this time). According to Hunter at the Design Council, (Hunter 2011b) IDEO's founding partner Bill Moggridge hired her because he was aware that designed outcomes needed to be more usable, especially in interactive design, where technology was becoming more complicated and usability was vital. Josephine Green also refers to this:

In many companies there has been a shift in the last decades from a focus on technology research and innovation to a focus on consumer research and innovation. This shift mirrors the realization that technology can drive growth but often fails to be sufficiently in tune with consumers' needs and aspirations. In other words, there have been too many mistakes and too many misses (Green 2007:4).

Fulton Suri was hired into an industrial design and engineering environment and, according to Hunter, was viewed as the 'usability police' (Hunter 2011b). The design teams would begin designing and halfway down the process they would show it to the Human Factors team, who would give feedback on its usability. The benefit and value of the user-centred design had not

been fully demonstrated at this point, and working with Human Factor experts only halfway through the design process demonstrates this.

As the role and practice of Human Factors developed, designers began to understand that the practice was about understanding users' latent needs, not just about making designs more useful, and that this could inspire innovation. The perception of the Human Factors team moved from being the 'usability police' to being the source of inspiration in the context of design. This shift in thinking and the positive results were highlighted in this description of Fulton Suri:

Fulton Suri and her colleagues will watch kids brushing their teeth, parents pushing strollers, or patients checking in at the emergency room, trying to find opportunities for design to improve the experience. Yet often that means looking for something less obvious: the ways in which the experience can improve the design. Their observations have brought rubber grips to Oral-B's toothbrushes, raised the height of Even-Flo's strollers, and streamlined DePaul Health Center's check-in processes.

For Fulton Suri it's as if the world is one big beta test, in which every feature is begging for improvement. Her IDEO colleagues then help translate those observations into products, often for some of the world's largest companies (Blum 2005).

The role of Human Factors practitioners or 'user advocates' in design agencies is to "know the user and to translate that knowing into principle and prescriptions that the designers could understand and use" (J Frascara 2004:1). This process began as two separate roles – the researcher and the designer. As the method became more widely adopted and developed by designers, the roles of researcher and designer were both carried out by the designer. The role of the user also shifted, from passive to actively taking a more participatory approach within the design process.

3.2.3 User-led design

At IDEO the relationship between the designer and the user started to change:

If IDEO were designing a remote control for a TV, rather than observing how people currently use TV, a foam block and some buttons would be provided and the user would be asked to put them on the remote control in the places they felt worked best (Hunter 2011b).

This example demonstrates the beginning of *user-led design* from which co-design was to evolve. User-led design works on the assumption that users are often best placed to identify

their own needs and to generate ideas for potential solutions, whereas with user-centred design, the designer observes and/or interviews largely passive users through conversations to allow their opinions on the products or service concepts to be shared (Sanders 2006).

In practice little user-led design is actually user led, but rather user-influenced. It is another way of describing a general approach of engaging the user in the design process to fully understand their wants and needs, and to see if they have valuable suggestions. This sentiment is shared by the *Social Innovator Exchange*, which is partnered by NESTA and The Young Foundation, on their website:

In practice much of what is called user-led design would be better described as user engagement in design, with designers and professionals still playing key roles as orchestrators and facilitators (Social Innovator 2011).

With user-led design, the designer holds the position of power and ultimate expertise, but rather than passively observe the user, they provide exercises and activities to understand them more fully. However the designers are not treating the user as their peer, and are not expecting the user to come up with solutions (which would occur in co-design), but through the tasks the designer facilitates they expect to learn more about what the solution may entail. Unlike user-led design, co-design is a collaboration between the client, the designer and the user – all in equal measure. With user-led design, the user is still very much a ‘subject’ of the design process, rather than a ‘partner’.

3.2.4 Co-creation

Within this landscape of collaborative design, the notions of co-creation and co-production have been growing alongside co-design. The terms ‘co-design’ and ‘co-creation’ are today often confused and/or treated synonymously, although opinions about who should be involved in these collective acts of designing, when, and in what role vary widely (Sanders 2008). The term ‘co-creation’ is being used in a number of different contexts today including the public sector and commercial companies with their customers, consumers and business partners.

Co-creation is the first of the approaches mentioned in this chapter that does not necessarily involve designers in the development of products and services. The key difference between co-creation and co-design is that the process of co-design involves **designers** and people not trained in design working together in the design development process (Sanders and Stappers 2008:2).

This is highlighted in publications on co-creation, of which the majority are from the perspective of the commercial sector. They focus on engaging people from business networks, creating commercial innovation and design engagement platforms for enterprise, where stakeholders

(consumers, clients, end users) but not designers, actively participate in a product, service or programme development process (Bhalla 2010 ; Ramaswamy and Gouillart 2004).

This differs in the public sector where co-creation can involve designers , and there are a few publications which refer to co-creation here: *Leading Public Sector Innovation: Co-creating for a Better Society* (Bason 2010), *Co-creating Services* (Cottam and Leadbeater 2004), and *Co-creation: A New Narrative for 21st Century Public Service Delivery* (Welsh Assembly Government 2009) and the many online articles and blogs from organizations such as the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA), NESTA and the Social Innovation Exchange. In this literature review, co-creation builds on design thinking (discussed on page 20) to involve citizens in creating public sector innovation.

Another key difference between the co-creation and co-design methods is that design teams will not know what the specific outcomes will be, whereas a team co-creating services and products will know in advance what they want. Sanders and Simons who define co-creation as “any act of collective creativity that is experienced jointly by two or more people” (2009:1) reinforce this idea, differentiating between co-creation and collaboration: “It is a special case of collaboration where the intent is to create something that is not known in advance” (2009:1). They continue by saying “the concept of co-design is directly related to co-creation. By co-design we refer to collective creativity as it is applied across the whole span of a design process. By these definitions, co-design is a specific instance of co-creation” (Sanders and Simons 2009:1).

In Michael Evamy’s paper *Are We the Champions? Designers and the Co-Creation of Public Services*, he talks about how co-creation is becoming common place, not only in the design of products in the commercial world, but also in the development of services and within the public sector. He goes on to point out though that many businesses will still claim that the users or customers do not know what they want, echoing Henry Ford’s classic remark: “If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses”.

A case can be made to keep the user as ‘subject’ rather than ‘partner’, and many people involved in user-centred design believe this is a superior method to ones that place too much emphasis of the user, who has no prior design experience (Kitson 2001). Davis (2008) argues this other side:

Design is in uncharted territory with respect to emergent systems and many of the current strategies for studying people are neither predictive of, nor responsive to, a rapidly changing environment of new technology and the resulting relationships among people, places, and things. If we accept the position of activity theorists (Nardi & Kapetlinin, 2006) – that design mediates the relationships between people and the activities they use to influence or interact with their environment – then our

research strategies have to go beyond testing actions and operations in Human Factors labs and asking questions in focus groups that separate people from the settings in which relevant behavior takes place (Davis 2008:73).

3.2.5 Co-production

Since the beginning of my research in 2006, co-production has emerged as a term mainly being used in the public sector, which takes co-creation and co-design to a new collaborative level, co-production. Co-design and co-creation are active from the start of the design process, exploring challenges, generating ideas to address them, and developing responses in realistic contexts. At this stage the work is transferred to the designer or developer to produce and implement. Co-production involves the stakeholders in these final stages as well.

Boyle and Harris define co-production as:

Co-production means delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are co-produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change (2009:11).

However they also note that like many new ideas, the term 'co-production' is used in a loose sense, which spans a range of related concepts, and that there is no agreed definition (2009:3).

Today, with public spending cuts and efforts to create a more self-reliant society, it is thought that co-production may be the way, not only to work with the public in transforming public services and generating ideas to address social challenges, but also to deliver the new solutions:

In the bad old days we started with designer centred design, and then we were enlightened and we moved to user-centred design. And then we got even more sophisticated and we started to design with, not just for. And now we're thinking about co-production. It's not even enough to design things together. We now must produce them and run them in a collaborative way (Design Council "Design Glossary" 2010).

Boyles and Harris claim to demonstrate why, when co-production is properly understood, it could create the most important revolution in public services since the Beveridge report in 1942. They suggest that the role of public service users as passive recipients, rather than a potential resource, is the reason why Beveridge's vision of a healthier and self-reliant society did not occur. There are of course many possible reasons for this, including a growing population, a change in lifestyles, the digital revolution and a more transient UK population. However the

point here is that the public could be seen a resource to reduce the demand of public services, instead of increase it, primarily through involvement in redesigning and delivering the services.

In Boyles and Harris paper for NESTA, they argue that co-production is a new way of thinking about the delivery of health, education, policing and other public services, and will result in outcomes that make them more effective, efficient and sustainable.

3.3 Designer's role in co-creation and co-production

According to Evamy (2008), the rise of co-creation has led designers to be one of the groups vying for the position of co-creation champion. This could also be true for co-production, despite neither being a process that centres on design. However, reviewing this chapter, there is a strong case for arguing that designers have been influential in the development and current practice of co-creation, due to their expertise gained from five decades of using participatory, and user-centred techniques.

It is easy to forget that working with the user is a concept that has been around since the 1960's when recent publications, such as the *Big Society by Design* (DOTT Cornwall 2010) refer to it as a new practice:

The challenge of democratising design is polarising people, most obviously designers. There exists a vocal core community who are interested in new ways of working and another much larger group who are relatively uninterested, regarding the methodologies as a departure from design practice without a proven business model (DOTT Cornwall 2010:26).

The fundamental aspects of working with users to aid the design process is not new. However the social and political environment in which co-design developed under New Labour was, as was the extent to which a democratic, collaborative approach was desired to address social sustainability challenges.

The following chapter will explore the concept of social sustainability, how it has emerged and developed over the last century, and how participatory approaches to achieving it arose under New Labour.

CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

As outlined in the previous chapter, participatory approaches to design have existed since the 1960s in a number of different forms. Aside from community architecture, the majority of collaborative design work was done in the commercial sector in the 1990s, especially in IT, to understand the needs and wants of the consumer. So why did a collaborative approach to designing emerge at the beginning of the twenty-first century for social sustainability projects? This question will be answered over the next few chapters.

This chapter provides the first part of the answer – the political landscape. Under New Labour, participatory approaches to achieve greater social sustainability were heavily supported and encouraged by the government, providing the right environment for co-design methods to develop.

4.1 Defining social sustainability

‘Sustainable development’ and ‘sustainability’ became the buzzwords of the late 20th and early 21st century. They were and still are concepts of widespread interest with the public and within the private, public and third sectors. This has, in some cases, resulted in the exploitation of the term ‘sustainable’ for marketing purposes. It is difficult to find any product, service or organisation now that does not claim to have some sort of ‘sustainable’ credentials, environmental, social, or both.

The success of the concept is largely due to the European political classes growing increasingly concerned about a widening gap between rich and poor, and the social and economic effects of climate change. In the last fifty years the world’s population has doubled (Chiras 2009:137), inequality in the distribution of global income has risen (Cohen 1995), and “polluted air, depleted ocean fisheries, species extinction, denuded landscapes, deforestation, widespread starvation and poverty are signs that humanity is pushing beyond the carrying capacity of the Earth” (Chiras 2009:136). As Dillard, Dujon and King write in *Understanding the Social Dimension of Sustainability*:

Recent years have witnessed increasing international attention to sustainability issues and, in response, a substantial upsurge in business, governmental, and non-governmental organization engagement in social responsibility initiatives, programs, and policies. What was often regarded as a largely peripheral issue has now become a mainstream concern for many in practical affairs within the academy (Dillard, Dujon and King 2009:1).

Despite the general growing awareness of the terms, sustainability risks being morphed into the category of words that many use but few truly comprehend such as 'climate change' and 'carbon footprint'. For a definition of 'sustainability', most still look to the Brundtland Report, commissioned in 1987. It focuses on sustainable development, and defines it as: "Development that meets the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

This definition was widely interpreted environmentally. The last fourteen years (since 1997), however, have witnessed a growing emphasis on **social** sustainability:

The social focus of sustainability has arisen as we have found ourselves trying to limit the environmental harm caused by our living activities, while also attempting to reduce deprivation of some of the poorest of the world's communities (Dillard, Dujon and King 2009:1).

Factors that affect our quality of life include poverty, numbers of people in employment, opportunities for education and training, health and availability of medical services, human rights and equal opportunities, crime and social disorder, housing provisions and quality. They affect society as a whole and can become problem areas if not regularly addressed at an individual and/or community level.

Much research and many publications have been produced in the field of social sustainability on social welfare, social relations or social cohesion/inclusion and social justice. However little has been produced on social sustainability as a concept, and therefore there is currently no consensus on how to define it. The literature that is closest to defining social sustainability comes from Dillard, Dujon and King. The authors talk about how sustainability is often thought of as comprising of three overlapping, mutually dependent goals. It is in the context of the third goal that this research is situated:

(a) to live in a way that is environmentally sustainable or viable over the long term;
(b) to live in a way that is economically sustainable, maintaining living standards over the long-term; and (c) to live a way that is socially sustainable, now and in the future (Dillard, Dujon and King 2009:2).

Dillard, Dujon and King call attention to what they refer to as a 'satisfactory definition' for social sustainability, which they find from Harris and Goodwin:

A socially sustainable system must achieve fairness in distribution and opportunity, adequate provision of social services, including health and education, gender

equity, and political accountability and participation (Dillard, Dujon and King 2009:pxix).

As Dillard, Dujon and King rightly comment, this definition does not deal with the process of achieving social sustainability, and they maintain that this should include community engagement and participation.

4.2 Social sustainability pre New Labour

Promoting a democratic society has emerged as a central criterion for social sustainability (Dillard, Dujon and King). This is also underlined by Kristen Magis and Craig Shinn who identify the following four principles of social sustainability, which are essentially value judgements or the product of value judgements:

- human well-being
- equality
- democratic government
- democratic society (Dillard, Dujon and King 2009:8).

The welfare state¹⁴ was the first serious national attempt at providing social justice, and was conceived of and delivered from the top down under 'old Labour'. Under New Labour, social sustainability replaced social justice as the aspiration. Understanding how and why social sustainability became more democratic through community engagement and participation is vital in understanding the context of why co-design became a key method in addressing social challenges under New Labour. A review of the development of the social dimension of sustainability to the current day sets the scene.

4.2.1 Our Common Future (Brundtland Report)

The objective of the Brundtland Report (1987) was to address the “deterioration of the human environment and natural resources and the consequences of that deterioration for economic and social development”. Despite the recognition of social development, many of the report's aims focused on environmental and physical development. Only one of them referred to social development for sustainability:

¹⁴ The idea of looking after and maintaining society began in 1940, when the Labour Party entered into a coalition with the Conservative Party to carry out research on Britain's social insurance and allied services. In 1942 William Beveridge produced a report of the findings and highlighted five social issues to be addressed; Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness. When Labour won the 1945 general election they implemented many social policies to address these issues and the Welfare State was born. Some of the policies included the Family Allowances Act 1945, National Insurance Act 1946, National Health Service Act 1946 and Pensions (Increase) Act 1947. Acts such as the National Health Service Act meant that for the first time anybody in the UK was entitled to healthcare that was paid for through the state and taxpayers. Previously only those who could afford to pay privately for healthcare received it. Although the Beveridge report is over 60 years old, it still provides the framework for many public services that exist today which address Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness. However changes in society, culture, lifestyle and demographics have arisen during this time, but few changes in the public services have occurred to account for this. Although the phrase 'social sustainability' was not used as part of the Beveridge Report, it was fundamentally about providing the services, programmes and systems to ensure individuals would be provided with the support they would need to sustain a decent lifestyle. The report also opened the door for all future social policy to be built upon.

To recommend ways concern for the environment may be translated into greater co-operation among developing countries and between countries at different stages of economical and **social development** and lead to the achievement of common and mutually supportive objectives that take account of the interrelationships between people, resources, environment and development (Brundtland 1987:11).

The unequal weighting of the environmental versus the social was noted by Connelly and Smith in *Politics and the Environment* (1999:238) but despite this lack of social focus, the Brundtland Report set the scene for Agenda 21.

4.2.2 Agenda 21

Agenda 21 was a product of the *Earth Summit*, a United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio in 1992. The report set out international actions to reconcile economic development with environmental concerns. It consisted of four sections, the first being 'social and economic dimensions', which emphasised the links between environmental issues and economic and social issues such as health, shelter and clean food. However Connelly and Smith commented that:

Agenda 21 does not simply promote the principle of basic rights to, for instance, health shelter, clean food and a safe environment. Its reach is far more radical and participatory – all groups have the right to articulate their perspectives in decision-making processes (Connelly and Smith 1999:238).

The intention was to involve democratic participation at international, national, regional and local levels. Some governments, including the UK's, required local authorities to implement a plan, under the title of 'Local Agenda 21'.

According to Richards in Dernbach (2002), it was Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development that put a "human face" on sustainable development (Dernbach 2002:1). In chapter 6 of Agenda 21 (*Protecting and Promoting Human Health*) the point is made that sustainable development maximises human potential whilst protecting the environment.

4.3 Social sustainability under New Labour

4.3.1 Local Agenda 21

Each local authority should enter into a dialogue with its citizens, local organizations and private enterprises and adopt "a local Agenda 21". Through consultation and consensus building, local authorities would learn from citizens and from local, civic, community, business and industrial organizations and acquire the information needed for formulating the best strategies. The process of consultation would increase household awareness of sustainable development issues (Local Agenda 1992).

Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 sets out goals for local communities to achieve sustainable development, known as 'Local Agenda 21' (LA21). It is one of the shortest chapters in Agenda 21 and stipulates four main objectives¹⁵, which essentially encourage local authorities to engage with local communities on issues regarding sustainable development. Chapter 28 recognises that participation and involvement from local authorities is vital as "so many of the problems and solutions being addresses by Agenda 21 have their roots in local activities".

In Tony Blair's first year as Prime Minister he delivered a statement at the UN General Assembly Special Session 1997 stating that he wanted all local authorities in the UK to adopt an LA21 strategy as a framework for community engagement, consultation and participation. By 2000, all Local Authorities had to write an LA21 (although they were not required to act on it) that provided a plan for involving the public in decision-making. LA21 was supposed to bring about a participatory process, ensuring that the public were at the heart of change – having their opinions heard and being actively involved as part of the solution. This was not often seen in practice, as the public commissioning systems were, and still are, particularly rigid and resistant to a new way of working.

In principle LA21 is highly participatory, engaging local communities in grassroots participation in projects and decision-making processes. There is a growing recognition that the adversarial nature of many existing local political institutions, particularly in the planning process, needs to be altered if participation is to become more meaningful (Connelly and Smith 1999:343).

¹⁵ Four main objectives are:

- a) By 1996, most local authorities in each country should have undertaken a consultative process with their populations and achieved a consensus on "a local Agenda 21" for the community;
- (b) By 1993, the international community should have initiated a consultative process aimed at increasing cooperation between local authorities;
- (c) By 1994, representatives of associations of cities and other local authorities should have increased levels of cooperation and coordination with the goal of enhancing the exchange of information and experience among local authorities;
- (d) All local authorities in each country should be encouraged to implement and monitor programmes which aim at ensuring that women and youth are represented in decision-making, planning and implementation processes.

LA21 became a strategy by which sustainable development could be achieved at a local level through engaging local communities. This was based on the premise that the pursuit of sustainable development should be founded on community (Littlewood and While). Up until the late 1990s the LA21 was mainly focussed on the effect of economic and social issues on the environment. However councils were concerned with tackling problems of poverty, housing, health, crime and economic development, which were barely being addressed in the environmentally focused LA21s. To support Local Authorities with their LA21s the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) was formed in 1998 with a Sustainable Development Unit that concentrated on social and economical development.

The public engagement objectives of LA21 have resulted in consultation becoming the norm within public sector practice. It has also provided the platform to build further forms of participation and collaboration. In *Sustainable Communities in Europe*, Lafferty (2001) raises some key questions about the way in which LA21 affected public participation, either as a strategic plan or a democratic reform, and the interaction and conflict that arose:

1. How and to what extent have LA21 activities affected participation, influence and power with respect to planning procedures and forms of local democracy?
2. What new forms of participation have emerged through LA21 process, and do they give promise of a more effective pursuit of sustainable development goals?
3. To what extent have LA21 initiatives incorporated new ideas of 'visioning', 'deliberative democracy', 'target-group steering', 'stake-holder' democracy and 'cooperative management regimes'?
4. Has the new dialogue associated with LA21 functioned as a one-way consultation process (under the purview of local authorities), or have new foundations been laid for more interactive strategic partnerships and shared responsibility? (Lafferty 2001:10)

Due to budget constraints, lack of enforcement and lack of support from central government, LA21 was not as fundamental to sustainable development as it was hoped. However this is not to say that it was a failure. Tens of thousands of people were part of a process that promoted, developed and increased understanding of sustainable development (Church and Young in Lafferty 2001). Also in many places LA21 provided a setting that allowed experimentation with newer approaches to participation and empowerment (Lafferty 2001:121).

LA21 opened up new ways for local decision-making based on principles of participation, inclusion and sustainability (Littlewood and While), but whether it helped deliver the key objectives of Agenda 21 to address sustainable development is undecided. As Church and Young point out, LA21 will probably be remembered not for its contribution to sustainable development, but for fostering a new approach to public service design and for the opportunities it created for "NGOs and local groups to be more involved in discussions, not just about council

policies, but about integrated approaches at neighbourhood level” (Lafferty 2001:125). In addition, LA21 also ensured engagement, consultation and participation was central to the development of New Labour’s social vision, notably – sustainable communities, personalisation and community empowerment.

It is important to note that although LA21 was focused on local government practice, the concepts of engagement and inclusion were also being developed and practiced within the NHS. In 1996, the *Central Research and Development Committee* formed a group, *Consumers in NHS Research*, which was to advise them on how to involve service users in the NHS research and development. In 2001, the group broadened its scope to include public health and social care research. The group changed its name in 2003, and became INVOLVE (not to be confused with Involve, a charity funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and others, which was cited in the literature review), a national advisory body funded by the Department of Health to support public involvement in the NHS. Over the last decade INVOLVE have promoted and encouraged service user involvement through a number of publications (Staley 2009 ; Tarpey 2006). Through organisations such as the NHS Institute for Involvement and the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, INVOLVE’s advocacy work has been put into practice.

4.4 A note on public participation

The notion of public involvement through consultation and participation was not created solely through the sustainable development agenda and New Labour. It had been practised before in different guises since the 1960’s in America, the UK and Scandinavia. Famously in 1969, Sherry Arnstein, who worked for the US department of health, education and welfare, published the article *A Ladder of Citizen Participation*. A ‘ladder’ of the ways in which the public can be involved with decision-making, usually undertaken at government level, was presented. It has since provided a model for much thinking and action on the subject of public/citizen participation within the UK government.

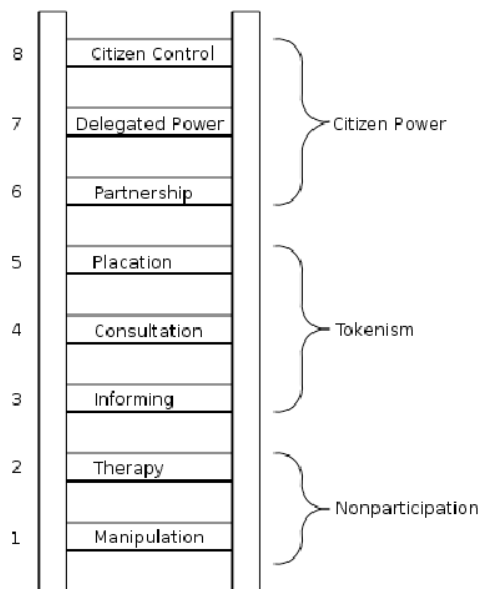


Figure 3. Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein 1969).

The bottom rungs of the ladder represent *Manipulation* and *Therapy*. Arnstein (1969) describes these two rungs as “non-participation” and notes that they are often a substitute for genuine participation as the main objective is for the ‘power holders’ to educate participants. The following three rungs (*Informing*, *Consultation* and *Placation*) are referred to as levels of “tokenism” meaning they allow the public to have a say and their voice heard, but involvement stops there. *Citizen Power* sums up the top three rungs. *Partnership* enables the participating public to negotiate and engage with the ‘power holders’ whereas *Delegated Power* and *Citizen Control* take decision-making to a new level where the majority of power, or full managerial power is handed over.

Over the course of the last three governments, the Conservatives from 1979 to 1997, Labour until 2010, and currently the Coalition, the concept of engagement has evolved in practice. Using Arnstein’s model it is possible to map how the successive governments have developed their thinking regarding public involvement. The Conservatives stayed largely on the ‘*informing*’ and ‘*consultation*’ rung, Labour on the ‘*partnership*’ rung and the Coalition (mainly due to the Conservatives ‘Big Society agenda’) potentially on the ‘*delegation of power*’ rung.

In the final years of John Major's Conservative Government, he proposed a “radical and innovative policy to tackle the growing pension crisis (. . .) which would shift the working population from the current unfunded state pension to a new pension entitlement based a pot of pension funding built up over a lifetime” (Blackwell 2009). The new pension idea was encouraged by a nationwide Conservative Party consultation project, which was a new and innovative method at the time. The consultation was called *Our Nation's Future*, and saw party

members throughout the country debate the themes of renewal and development regarding the pension. Although the consultation was with party members only, rather than the general public, it still was one of the first steps to a more participative form of decision-making.

John Major was also responsible for the Citizens Charter (aka the 'big idea'), which focused on responsiveness and the setting of standards in public services. The Charter that was introduced in 1991 aimed to improve public services by:

- making administration accountable and citizen friendly.
- ensuring transparency and the right to information.
- taking measures to cleanse and motivate civil service.
- adopting a stakeholder approach.
- saving time of both executives and the clientele (House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee 2008).

To achieve these aims, the public sector started to undertake customer consultations through methods such as citizens' panels and juries. Therefore when New Labour was elected they inherited a public sector that was already aware of and practicing citizen involvement, though the focus was on consumerism (i.e. establishing an expectation that quality, choice, standards and value would be provided for citizens / consumers using public services), rather than democratic engagement.

A central theme in New Labour's programme of public sector reform when they came to power was enhancing the responsiveness of services to users and as Barnett highlights, the work built upon the Citizens Charter. Another of New Labour's aims was to strengthen democracy through providing the public with more chances to be involved with decision-making. Public participation therefore played a central role in New Labour's modernisation, inclusion and 'active citizen' agendas:

Achieving this end [reform] of public services to suit diverse needs of different organisations does not need more money, it does need us to use existing money differently and to change the way we live and care for each other. It entails moving from the Welfare State to the Welfare Society and empowering people in the neighbourhoods where they live to shape and direct the quality of their lives and public assets. It entails creating social capital (Balsall Health Forum Books and papers 2008).

The focus on building social capital (building connections and capabilities within and between social networks), rather than solely providing the services the public needed, was part of redefining the role of being a UK citizen, to one that is more actively involved in the running of the country. Referring to Arstein's ladder and the partnership rung that New Labour positioned

themselves on, the government wanted to redistribute some of the power they held. Planning and decision-making responsibilities were to be shared through community partnership and programmes (such as *A New Deal for Communities*), and through policies that required working closely with the public (such as LA21).

Arnstein's Ladder of Participation can also be used to map the design industry in the same way. Design practice has shifted from being a discipline that involves the designer creating the idea and designing **for** the end user, to now designing **with** them to gain an inside perspective. Socially sustainable design practice has moved up the rungs from designs being produced with little or no input from the user, through to 'Consulting' the user on what they think of a design, to collaboratively designing the outcome in 'Partnership', and most recently to providing tools for them to design themselves; 'Delegated Power'.

The next chapter reviews the socially focused design specialisms that emerged under New Labour that have employed co-design for social sustainability projects.

CHAPTER 5

DESIGN SPECIALISMS PRACTICING CO-DESIGN

5.1 The emergence of sustainable design practices under New Labour

Attentive as it always is to human needs and limitations, as well as to well-being and progress, design can be instrumental in dealing with identity and pluralism in countries that have seen large waves of immigration by helping to reconfigure hybrid communities using new, open-ended symbols of belonging; it can help governments deal with pressing social issues ranging from an aging population to obesity to emergency displacements of large groups of people because of catastrophes, man-made or natural; it can support policymakers in their attempt to prototype new models for health-care systems and other large infrastructures; it can serve as an interface between science and policymaking by helping integrate innovation into people's lives and steer behaviors in the right direction with interventions that are delicate, sensitive, and inspirational enough to make a big difference.

If all this seems too ambitious, that is because we have only begun to tap into design's real potential. Design is too often seen as a superfluous and elitist preoccupation or, in the best cases, as a service. However, design is much more than logos, posters, buildings, and objects. New fields of practice such as social design, information design, and design thinking offer the right tools for all sorts of social agendas (Antonelli 2011).

Alongside participatory approaches becoming common practice within the public sector in the late 1990s, a new design specialism using co-design to tackle societal issues was emerging under New Labour. This specialism draws on the practice of sustainable design and has many guises and names: 'social design', 'social innovation', 'service design' and 'transformation design'. There are currently a small number of design companies practicing this specialism under these different names. Academia recognises these practices in research and teaching, and organisations such as NESTA and the Design Council have promoted them through papers, reports and conferences.

These organisations appear to each support and champion particular guises of the specialisms, and be taking ownership of them. The Design Council have actively promoted 'service design' (for both commercial and social benefit) through their quarterly magazine and *Design Of The Time* (DOTT) programme and the Design Council's RED team, who ran projects "to tackle social and economic issues through design led innovation" (Red 2011) coined the phrase

'transformation design'. Similarly, NESTA has commissioned many reports on 'service innovation' and the RSA in 2007 re-branded itself as an organisation that is "removing barriers to social progress" and has set up many "social design" programmes, projects and competitions.

There is much debate over the different names for the work and what differentiates them, which throughout this research has raised the question of whether it matters what this emerging use of design is called as long as it is working. Many in the field think too much time is spent trying to name or brand the specialism and not enough time spent doing it. This is partially true, and while the focus of this research addresses the reasons for a shift in some design practice to social sustainability as a driver, the thesis also acknowledges the new terms and definitions in order to understand how the design world wants the emerging specialism to be perceived, internally and externally. The terms outlined below will be used to understand the synergies and the role design practice plays in promoting social sustainability.

5.2.Sustainable Design - 1980's

Sustainable design first appeared in the 1980s, during a time when the design industry grew by about 35 per cent a year for most of the decade (Whiteley 1993). Towards the end of the eighties, people began realising that consumer-led design, "far from being the basis of the solution to society's problems, ... was one of society's problems" (Whiteley 1993). The role of design in the process of consumption needed to be reconsidered and designers had to start facing up to their responsibilities.

According to John Thackara (2005), 80 per cent of environmental impact is determined at the design stage. Designers are becoming more acknowledged for their distinctive professional contribution and the economic growth they can create (Florida 2002) however as a result, designers find "little alternative but to support a wasteful and competitive system that sacrifices environmental interests for economic gains" (Wood 2008:1).

The practice of sustainable design positions itself as the alternative to this scenario, aiming to reduce environmental and social damage. Sustainable design is the discipline of designing with economic, social, and ecological sustainability in mind. Over the last three decades, it has been used at various scales, from designing small every-day products to the building of cities. Sustainable design aids the global need to promote better ways of living and has been developed within a context of environmentalism and societal welfare. Unlike 'green design' or 'eco design' that emphasise the environment and resources, sustainable design has firmly established itself with an additional focus on society and the habitual ways in which we live our lives.

Manzini defines design for sustainability as:

A strategic design activity finalised to conceive and develop sustainable solutions. That is systems of products and services that enable people to live better, consuming (far) fewer environmental resources and improving (or, in many cases, regenerating) their physical and social contexts of life (Manzini 2006:1).

As sustainable design has emerged, there has been a shift from solutions being product-based to being service and whole systems-based. This, as Manzini highlights, is because:

solutions are not, for instance, about cars, washing machines, food packaging, but they are about mobility, clean clothes, food delivery. The shift “from products to results” is the first and fundamental step to take in the transition toward a sustainable well-being and towards the sustainable business ideas that could make it possible (Manzini 2006:6).

The more systematic and joined-up approach that sustainable design promotes has set the scene for a number of new design practices that emerged under New Labour. These practices generate solutions through participatory design and research, which often result in the development of design services and systems.

5.3 Service Design - 1990's

Service design is fundamentally the creation, development or adaptation of services to improve the customer's experience and their interaction with the service provider. Sanders (2008) states that, like many of the new disciplines written about in this section, service design incorporates several traditional design disciplines such as visual communication design, information design and interaction design. Service design is a human-centered approach and an outside-in perspective (Holmlid ; Mager 2006). It is concerned with systematically applying design methodology and principles to the design of services (Bruce and Bessant 2002 ; Holmlid). It addresses the functionality and form of services from the perspective of clients. It aims to ensure that service interfaces are useful, usable, and desirable from the client's point of view and effective, efficient, and distinctive from the supplier's point of view (Mager 2006).

The practice grew out of the corporate world and was used initially in the commercial service industry, such as mobile phone services, in-flight services and online banking. This remains the sector in which it is growing quickly, however from the beginning of the 21st century, it crossed over to the public sector and was used in the reform of public services. Due to the embryonic state of service design (in comparison with other design practices), there is currently no distinction in the name given to the practice of service design that is used for socially focused projects, and service design used in the commercial sector for economic gain. For the

purposes of this dissertation, service design will always be referred to in the context of social sustainability, unless otherwise stated.

To understand socially focused service design, it is important to look at where commercial focused service design originated. In the 1990's designers began to apply their skills to help manage and problem solve within the growing service sector. The output of services eclipsed that of goods in developed economies over twenty years ago (Peer Insight 2007) and "accounts for over 70 per cent of output" (Great Britain 2006b). The growth of this sector was partially due to the declining manufacturing industries, which reached a critical point under Thatcher's government (Hollins 2006). With manufacturing being outsourced to countries with cheaper labour, much of the product design work followed, with foreign firms winning the contracts. In response a small niche of the UK design industry began to apply their skills to the growing commercial service sector. The newfound use for design, coupled with the government's push towards service reform, provided an opening for designers to work with the public sector. It is not just in the UK that this design movement is found – Italy, America and the Scandinavian countries are practicing it as well.

The shift from traditional craft-based design or product design to service design may appear a big leap in thinking, however Mager (2006) observes that designers are using the same formula as they have always done: to "visualise, formulate, and choreograph" solutions to problems. The majority of designers visualise and formulate solutions to problems through a reflexive process that involves interpreting their customers' or users' requirements, regardless of their design discipline.

Service design has developed through a logical progression over the last two decades that has seen many design disciplines borrow techniques and processes from each other. New technological advances have supported the adaptation of graphic design for the design of new interfaces for products, systems and websites. Alongside this, clients have demanded that the experience customers receive should be 'designed' as well and this practice is known as experiential design¹⁶.

All of the practices mentioned have been incorporated into service design practice. The main difference between service design in the two sectors is that commercial designers are developing services for service providers, and in the public sector they are designing them for the service user. Other differences between service design in the two sectors, which draw on this point, were discussed with Chris Downs, one of the founders of the service design agency Live|Work:

¹⁶ Experiential design became a discipline in the 1990's and has close links with interaction design. It centres around the user's experience of the product, service or environment, rather than the functionality of the design.

There are subtle differences in the language. You can genuinely co-design and co-produce in the public sector, more than you can in the private sector at the moment, and that is because citizens, rather than consumers, have a larger vested interest in public service. You don't feel like you are a stakeholder in a company that sells coffee (Downs 2008).

Joe Heapy, one of the founders of the service design agency Engine, confirmed the use of co-design in service design within the public sector:

The differences are probably around the people that get involved, the amount of control the client wants to retain – which I think is greater in the public sector. We tend to do a greater proportion of facilitation and co-design, co-creation or whatever word you want to call it, 'working together with' in the public sector than the commercial sector. They want to be involved (Heapy 2009).

5.3.1 Service Design agencies

Engine (formed 2000)

Engine was founded in 2000 by Joe Heapy and Oliver King, and played a key role in promoting and building understanding of service design within the design industry. Engine started as a consultancy with a private sector focus, but now also works with the public sector, accounting for 15% of their work based on revenue (Heapy 2009).

According to Heapy, when Engine formed, there was no discussion about designers being involved in service innovation in the public sector. It was only through various contacts at the Design Council that they got involved in a public sector programme called the Renaissance Programme, which explored what happens if you ask designers to improve schools.

The programme was conceived in quite a conventional way, looking at better procurement, a very Design Council approach, but thinking about objects - can you work with schools and persuade Local Authorities to buy better furniture and create better learning environments? But we were frustrated by that approach and starting taking our projects with schools further, towards looking at how the school actually worked, and that's what interested us (Heapy 2009).

Engine's first public sector project, which led the way for further socially focused work, was set up by an intermediary body (the Design Council in this case) between the design agency and the public sector. This is central to why co-design became a method to promote social sustainability, and is examined in more depth in the following chapter.

Live|Work (formed 2001)

Live|Work is also one of the original service design agencies, which was set up in 2001 by Chris Downs, Lavrens Loville and Ben Reason. They were instrumental in bringing the concept of service design into the mainstream in the UK and worked closely with the Design Council and NESTA to promote and expand the practice. The company's offer focuses on service improvement, service innovation and service strategy, and was initially set up to provide this to the private sector. In 2004 they started working with the public sector as well, and in 2009, it accounted for 50% of their work. According to Downs, there was always potential to deal with bigger problems than improving private companies' services and turnover, and Live|Work's first public sector project was as part of a consortium for the *Design, Innovation, Education Centre* in the North East that aimed to use service design as a way of transforming a regional economy (Downs). Although this project was not specifically addressing social sustainability, it provided Live|Work knowledge about using service design in the public sector.

Engine and Live|Work are the 'original' service design agencies, and since their creation, a number of other agencies have formed. The ones that also work in the public sector include:

Radar Station (formed 2004)

Radar Station is one of the newer service design agencies, although it does not specifically refer to itself this way, but prefers "a design-led management consultancy that helps executives and operatives in organisations understand the changing needs and desires of their customers and use this insight to help them transform their businesses" (Radarstation 2011).

Sidekick (formed 2009)

Sidekick Studios refers to itself as a social innovation company that uses the internet and design to develop solutions to social problems. Within Sidekick, they run a service design consulting practice that supports public sector organisations to "make the most out of good design and useful, affordable technologies to improve the social outcomes they create through the services they deliver" (Sidekick Studios 2011).

Snook (formed 2009)

One of the newest agencies, Snook is socially focused and uses service design to improve the services we all use every day. Snook's motto is "transforming people", which they say means giving the public more responsibility and empowering them in their work. Unlike the other new service design agencies, a collaborative approach is key to their work.

5.4 Transformation Design - 2000's

Unlike service design, transformation design is more user-led, participatory in its methods, and solely socially focused. It is very similar to service design in many ways, though the outcome is

not always service-based and there is a greater emphasis on democratising the design process, using 'co-design' as a central methodology.

Transformation design is defined in broad terms as:

new thinking and practical design solutions in the form of systems, services and products. [The] approach is human centred, involving users, business and service providers in the design process...[to] explore a wide range of [social] issues (Cottam and Leadbeater 2004).

Hilary Cottam, one of the pioneers behind transformation design, distinguishes it from other socially sustainable design practices by the methods that are used. These methods are a mixture of user-centred and participatory approaches, and strategic consultancy. Similar to service design, transformation design uses a consultancy model, but differs from traditional consultants by bringing together partners with a range of expertise to form the 'design team'.

The use of collaboration and the knowledge of non-designers for tackling complex social issues is an identifying characteristic of transformation design. Policy makers, private businesses and economists are brought together with the target audience, who then work with a multi-disciplinary design team throughout the project. These teams will typically draw on a range of design disciplines from industrial design, service design and graphic design, and combine them with other professions' expertise such as ethnography, psychology and marketing.

Transformation design is a kind of catch-all for a very interdisciplinary way of working, because the projects and work we do could not be done by designers alone. We always have at least three, usually five different disciplines in our team, of whom one or two members may have been trained as designers. (Vanderbeeken 2007).

With all the many professions involved in the transformation design process, the role of the designer is changing to that of a project manager or facilitator, organising all the different bodies involved. This has led to many questioning whether this is actually design, and if a designer should lead it.

5.4.1 Transformation Design agencies

RED (2004 – 2006)

Transformation design was pioneered by the Design Council's RED team from 2004 – 2006. RED consisted of a small multi-disciplinary team of designers and innovators, and was set up in response to Tony Blair's vision of public services being redesigned around the user. "The key to

reform is redesigning the services around the user – the patient, the pupil, the passenger or the victim of crime” (IDeA 2011).

RED, a ‘do-tank’, aimed to ‘transform’ social issues through design with the idea of helping government rethink the systems and structures within public services, and redesigning them where needed by placing individual users at the centre of new solutions. This user-centred approach is central to transformation design and is identical to service design in terms of methods used.

RED’s description of itself as a do-tank is a good way of depicting transformation design. It takes topics that think-tanks think about but do not put into action, and transforms them into operations that ultimately involve citizens in the process of achieving behaviour change. During their two operational years, RED developed a number of techniques, processes and outputs for participation and problem solving, which could be seen in work around care for the elderly, management of chronic illnesses and reduction of energy consumption (Burns et al.). The techniques and processes applied design thinking and other non-craft based design skills to non-traditional design territories. The results, therefore, tended not to be traditional design outcomes (i.e. products) but instead new systems, policies, services and structures within organisations.

In their own words, RED used “product, communication, iteration and spatial designers’ core skills to transform the ways in which the public interacts with systems, organisations and policies” (RED 2006:6). They believed that “good design creates products, services, spaces, interactions and experiences that not only satisfy a function or solve a problem, but that are also desirable, aspirational, compelling and thoughtful” (RED 2006:9).

This statement demonstrates the qualities that can result from using design to solve problems and these can be applied to tackle social problems. Design not only finds a solution to a problem, which many non-designers with initiative could also do, but makes it ‘desirable’ and ‘compelling’. This is the communication skill of design. To solve a problem successfully, there must be not only initiative and insight, but also communication to ensure that it is understood by all. This skill will be explored further in chapter 9.

Participle (formed 2007)

Transformation design did not catch on as a phase or practice anywhere outside of RED and their employees. When RED was decommissioned, Participle was formed by the core team behind RED – Hillary Cottam, Charles Leadbeater and Hugo Manassei.

Participle works in a different way to the other design agencies in the sustainable design field, as they do not work on a consultancy basis commissioned by the public or social sector.

Instead they raise capital through private and public organisations to address specific social challenges, such as the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population. As the public sector is not their sole client, they are not restricted to working on public services, improving them or creating new ones. Instead they are able to create new types of services and solutions for the public that address the social challenge, without having to work within the limitations of what already exists and what the public sector is able to implement. Participle's mission is to design and develop large-scale projects that demonstrate the next generation of public services (Participle 2010).

5.5 Social design - 2000s

The term social design first appeared by Victor Papenek through his classic book *Design for the Real World* in 1984. In the twenty first century the term has been recovered to describe a design practice that, like transformation design, solely works in the field of social sustainability. Papenek focussed on the designer's responsibility to create greater social good within product design. Today the sentiment is the same, but the practice addresses the design of social systems, services and communications.

Where social design differs from service design, but is similar to transformation design, is that co-design methods are central to the work and lead the design process, allowing any outcome (be it service or product) that answers the brief. However for service design, a service will always be the outcome. Co-design is therefore used as a method to collaboratively create the services. Deborah Szebecko, founder of Thinkpublic commented on this distinction:

I think co-design is being used in more social areas. I'm not saying that Live|Work and Engine aren't using co-design or being socially conscious, but that's not the reason they set up in the first place. They come at it from a service perspective. I think Thinkpublic and a few other organisations come at it saying how do we involve the community in it and how do we build local ownership? (Szebeko 2011)

Due to the complexity of creating social sustainability, which involves community engagement and ownership over the problems and outcomes, there is not one method, approach or outcome that holds all the solutions. Therefore there is not a descriptive name for the practice that sums up its deliverable, in the way that service, product, graphic or fashion design does. This has lead to the 'rebirth' of the term 'social design' to serve as an all-encompassing term.

Victor Margolin, Professor of Design History at the University of Illinois, was part of a discussion about what to call a socially focused design conference that was put on as part of a design festival (*World Design Capital Torino 2008*, an ICSID initiative of the International Design Alliance). The conference *Changing the Change* was "an international conference on the role

and potential of design research in the transition towards sustainability” (Cipolla and Periccio 2008). Margolin declared:

I have been using the term "social design" quite a lot and I am more or less satisfied with it. In English, it has a reference to the profession of social work and suggests design with an explicit social agenda. It also relates to the term "social action," which in the United States suggests social concern. On the other hand, it is evident that from a semantic view, all design is social, a point that should not be overlooked. [...]

I am still satisfied with the term "social design" which is growing in use and interest. If we choose another term, it should have the same connotation of "improving social welfare (Margolin 2008).

The designers practicing under the title of social design are essentially addressing the improvement of social welfare. They are working across the public and not-for-profit sectors on a wide range of social challenges, from public health, crime and the improvement of social services, to the promotion of volunteering and community cohesion.

5.5.1 Social Design agencies

IDEO (formed 1991)

IDEO is one of the oldest and most renowned design and innovation agencies. It was set up in 1991 by David Kelley and Bill Moggridge to help businesses innovate and grow, and since then it has opened offices around the world. The firm started working in the social and public sector arena at the start of the 2000's, and according to Mat Hunter, an ex-IDEO partner, it was due to a new cohort of recruits who were younger and started demanding that IDEO did more socially focused work (Hunter 2011b).

IDEO's socially focused work takes the same human-centered, design-based approach as their private sector work, ensuring the solutions they devise are based on people's needs, behaviors, and desires. As a 'design and innovation agency', these solutions can take the form of products, services, spaces, or interactive experiences. In late 2011 IDEO will open IDEO.org in the USA "to spread human-centered design through the social sector and improve the lives of people in low-income communities across the globe" (IDEO 2011).

Thinkpublic (formed 2004)

Thinkpublic was set up in 2004 by Deborah Szebeko as a public service and communication design agency, working solely with the public and third sector on projects that aim to "create better services that focus on the real needs, resources and potential of users". In 2011 it now

calls itself a social design agency and works with the public sector, third sector and communities to; “design creative solutions to social issues that deliver value and impact, radically re-design public services and how they are delivered, and activate people to realise their potential in society” (Thinkpublic 2010).

Sea Communications (formed 2004)

Sea Communications is a design and innovation agency that works both in the private and public sector. Its recent public sector work (2010 onwards) places them in the category of a social design agency as they use a co-design approach to generate social innovations for issues such as unemployment and strengthening communities.

Uscreates (formed 2006)

Uscreates was founded in 2006 by the author and Zoe Stanton as a design agency that worked solely with the public and social sector to tackle social challenges. During the last five years, Uscreates has addressed challenges such as teenage pregnancy, smoking cessation and antisocial behaviour. This involves using participatory design approaches to identify behavioural insights from which communications, services and programmes can be designed to support change.

This chapter provides an overview of the different social focused design specialisms that formed under New Labour. The next chapter explores how the design agencies working in these fields, using co-design, were first recognised as a means of support for the public sector on their social sustainability projects.

CHAPTER 6

CATALYSTS FOR CO-DESIGN FOR SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

6.1 Public sector recognition of socially focused design agencies

As can be seen from the previous chapters, an environment was created by New Labour for user-centred and participatory approaches in public sector work, and that a number of design agencies formed who employ this approach. What the research has not identified so far is *how* the small number of design agencies became visible to public sector commissioners, and started to be considered as potential agents of change. The reasons centre on the desire for innovation within the public sector, and the promotion of co-design, by organisations such as NESTA and the Design Council, to achieve it.

These reasons can be broken down further and viewed as a chronological series of events, which are expanded on throughout the chapter:

- Raised awareness within the public sector of the importance of innovation, social innovation and the role of design in promoting them
- Institutional support for design agencies to develop innovative, socially focused practices
- Promoted examples of co-design being used to address social challenges
- Support and encouragement for the public sector by non-departmental government bodies in using co-design for social sustainability

It is important to remember that for the public sector to commission design agencies to address social challenges was, and still is, a big leap in thinking. Design is not typically associated with creating social solutions within the public sector. Without the backing of key organisations like NESTA and the Design Council, and the promotion of innovation (i.e. trying new processes and methods to produce innovative results) by the government, a design agency proposing to tackle an inadequate public service or improve a health or social inequality would have seemed absurd. Even with the work of the key organisations and the innovation agenda, for many it still is.

6.2 Raised awareness within the public sector of the importance of innovation, social innovation and the role of design in promoting them

6.2.1 Innovation Agenda (2003 - 2010)

In 2003, within the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), there was an in-depth discussion on innovation, documented in the *Innovation Report: Competing in the Global Economy: The Innovation Challenge* (Great Britain 2003a). The report defined innovation as the successful exploitation of new ideas, often involving new technologies or technological applications. It was a simple definition which other literature later expanded on:

The introduction of newness into a system usually, but not always, in relative terms and by the application (and occasionally invention) of a new idea. This produces a process of transformation that brings about a discontinuity in terms of the subject itself (such as a product or service) and/or its environment (such as an organisation, market or a community). (Osborne and Brown 2005:116)

The *Science and Innovation Investment Framework* was published by the DTI, HM Treasury, and the Department for Education and Skills, which acknowledged that “for the UK economy to succeed in generating growth through productivity and employment in the coming decade, it must invest more strongly than in the past in its knowledge base, and translate this knowledge more effectively into business and public service innovation” (Great Britain 2004).

It was through this report that ‘public service innovation’ was introduced. Up to this time (2004) innovation was mainly being explored and regarded as a process and outcome for business, not for the public sector and their services. However New Labour’s public service reform agenda needed to be innovative to succeed, and this message had to spread. The *Science and Innovation Investment Framework* was one of the first reports to do this.

Under the leadership of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the DTI at the time (David Sainsbury), the organisation started exploring the innovation landscape of the UK by looking at organisations involved in supporting innovation. Although the concept of innovation had started to become a major focus for private companies and non-departmental public bodies, it was being discussed and practiced in a very traditional sense. It focused on a linear process from research through to development, and therefore mainly consisted of technological or scientific advances.

Through the ‘landscape review’, the DTI recognised that design played a role in innovation as the element that made the innovation marketable (Cox 2005). Design was seen as a skill at the end of the linear innovation process that turned the outcome into a desirable, usable product (innovation was still mainly product based, not service based at this time), but it was not

recognised as a method to generate the new ideas. However with the heightened understanding of the link between design and innovation, the Design Council (which the DTI funded) became much more important in the development of this connection, and as Sainsbury's Special Advisor said 'that's when the light went on' (Thomas 2010).

By 2008 the perception and understanding of innovation was transformed as it started to be referred to as "the creative application of tried-and-tested technologies and the role of **design** in developing innovative products and services" (Great Britain 2008a). The recognition that design had a more fundamental role in innovation, and not just in making products and services desirable had been in part due to the *Cox Review*.

6.2.2 The Cox Review (2005)

Approximately a year after the *Science and Innovation Investment Framework* was issued the *Cox Review* was published. The review was conducted by the chairman of the Design Council at the time, Sir George Cox, and commissioned by HM Treasury. The *Cox Review* provided an overview of the creative industries and how they could be used to boost performance in business. It was through the findings that the Treasury recognised innovation as one of its five drivers of productivity (NESTA 2007). It concluded that innovation was about using design throughout the process, not just as an add on at the end. This was a key moment for the design industry as it publicly gave it a new importance and role¹⁷.

The *Cox Review* starts with a very clear outline of what innovation, creativity and design are and how they are linked:

'*Creativity*' is the generation of new ideas – either new ways of looking at existing problems, or of seeing new opportunities, perhaps by exploiting emerging technologies or changes in markets.

'*Innovation*' is the successful exploitation of new ideas. It is the process that carries them through to new products, new services, new ways of running the business or even new ways of doing business.

'*Design*' is what links creativity and innovation. It shapes ideas to become practical and attractive propositions for users or customers. Design may be described as creativity deployed to a specific end (Cox 2005:2).

¹⁷ The link between design and innovation was also being explored elsewhere in the world at the same time; design company IDEO were promoting the concepts of designing-user experience and had released a book entitled *The Art of Innovation*, other design companies such as Seymour Powell were also exploring innovation (although mainly product based), but most prominently it was being led at Stanford University's 'd.school' (design school) in the USA. It was founded by David Kelley of IDEO and had opened up as an alternative to the 'B-school' (business school), to drive 'multi-disciplinary innovation'. The d.school has become a hub to bring together students in engineering, medicine, business, the humanities, and education to '*learn design thinking and work together to solve big problems in a human centered way*'. The students then take the design thinking methodology and applied it to their area of expertise to generate innovative solutions to problems.

In both the *Cox Review* and in the government generally, innovation was seen as the responsibility of civil servants and not of designers and the design industry. However there were two key aspects of the review that acted as catalysts for design to be recognised as useful in addressing social challenges: the public statement that design was a key aspect of innovation, and the reviews' recommendations in supporting this¹⁸.

Through a range of publications (Great Britain 1998b ; 1998c ; 2000c ; 2000e ; 2008a), New Labour started to promote and encourage government departments to use innovation in social and public service challenges, but there was little guidance on how to be innovative, or which organisations could be outsourced to deliver it. The recognition that design and design agencies could be these organisations, and be beneficial in the *social* innovation process, was vital in providing future work for sustainable design agencies. This recognition was stimulated through organisations such as NESTA and the Young Foundation championing and advocating its use.

6.2.3 Development of social innovation (2005 -)

Geoff Mulgan defines social innovation as “the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs” (Mulgan 2007a:9) and public sector innovation as “new ideas that work at creating public value. The ideas have to be at least in part new (rather than improvements); they have to be taken up (rather than just being good ideas); and they have to be useful” (Mulgan 2007c:6). As can be seen from these two definitions, the terms are often used interchangeably.

The Young Foundation has become an advocate for social innovation, and since the organisation was set up in 2005 they have produced numerous publications and projects to develop the concept, and promote it to the public sector through policy briefings (NESTA 2008). They have built leadership for innovation through umbrella bodies (such as the IDEa and the Local Government Association) and lobbied for social venture funds to finance it.

Examples of social innovation have occurred in the re-organisation of social care and healthcare, as well as the development of new public health programmes, and new methods to cut carbon emissions, for example: *NHS Direct* and *Learndirect*; *Drug Courts* and *Police Community Support Officers*; online tax transactions and restorative justice; cognitive

¹⁸ Cox Review recommendations:

- Tackle the issue of awareness and understanding, including by taking the *Design for Business* programme, which has been developed and piloted by the Design Council over the last four years, and making it widely available to SMEs throughout the UK and those that work with them.
- Improve the effectiveness of government support and incentive schemes, prominent among which is the Research and Development (R&D) Tax Credits system.
- Tackle the issue, in higher education, of broadening the understanding and skills of tomorrow's business leaders, creative specialists, engineers and technologists
- Take steps to use the massive power of public procurement, both centrally and locally, to encourage more imaginative solutions from suppliers.
- Raise the profile of the UK's creative capabilities by way of a network of centres of creativity and innovation across the UK, with a national hub in London.

behavioural therapy for prisoners and *Sure Start*; *Connexions* and criminal assets recovery; congestion charges and *Children's Commissioners* (NESTA 2007).

The Young Foundation formed a partnership with NESTA in 2008 for specific social innovation projects such as the *Launchpad*, which develops ideas for social ventures, and since 2009 the partnership has acted as national advisor to the Strategic Health Authorities' *Regional Innovation Funds*. Together, NESTA and the Young Foundation promote radical innovation in public services as a necessity "because without bold new approaches, our public services will be over-stretched by the short-term demands of the downturn and overwhelmed by the long term challenges of the future" (Harris and Halkett 2007:Executive Summary). They also maintain that social innovation has moved centre stage over the last decade because "the existing structures and policies have found it impossible to crack some of the most pressing issues of our times – such as climate change, the worldwide epidemic of chronic disease, and widening inequality" (Mulgan, Murray and Caulier-Grice 2011:3).

Design agencies have been commissioned by the Young Foundation and NESTA to support their social innovation work, by using design methods (including co-design) to generate, and develop a user-centred and participatory approach to social innovation. The two organisations have also been active in the promotion of their projects to the public sector, demonstrating how co-design can be used in generating social innovations.

The collaborative approach to creating social innovations is considered to be as important as the new solutions themselves, as their ultimate relevance and success are dependent on the users' experience and participation (Green 2007:17). As well as this, Leadbeater, highlights that one of the ten "habits of mass innovation" is innovative societies that "encourage people and ideas to find one another and combine creatively" (Leadbeater 2006:9). Leadbeater believes innovation frequently comes from "seeking ideas in adjacent fields of disciplines which when abducted into your own domain might yield a new insight or combination" (Leadbeater 2006:10). Co-design is effectively facilitating this process of combining people, thoughts and knowledge from different public domains.

6.3 Institutional support for design agencies to develop innovative, socially focused practices

Although there was raised awareness within the public sector of the importance of design and participatory approaches in achieving social innovation, there were few design agencies specialising in this area. Providing support and encouragement for designers to develop socially focused design agencies to supply a potential demand for co-design was therefore needed.

6.3.1 Creative Pioneer Programme (2003 - 2006)

To support creative graduates to become entrepreneurs, the *Creative Pioneer Programme* (CPP) was devised in 2003. CCP built upon one of the core aims behind the creation of NESTA, to build and support the UK's talented thinkers. The idea for setting up NESTA had been devised by Lord David Puttnam, *Founding Chair of NESTA* and John Newbigin, a strategic consultant for the cultural industries, who had the idea to create an endowment for the nation's intellectual property (Prime 2010). Puttnam and Newbigin wanted to understand why the UK was so successful in producing creative people and support it further, so a range of programmes were started which focused on creative thinking in business, how the UK could continue to excel at it and how it could be funded. It became apparent that creative graduates were not featuring in this plan, and so the *Creative Pioneer Programme* was born.

The *Creative Pioneer Programme* was devised during a time a golden period for the creative industries, when they were hailed as the saviour of the economy. The creative economy was growing while other sectors were not, which was one of the reasons why the *Cox Review* had been commissioned to "look at how best to enhance UK business productivity by drawing on our world-leading creative capabilities" (Policyconnect 2011). The CPP was set up during the review to support the development of new businesses that would carry on growing the creative economy.

The idea for the CPP came from Sir David Puttnam, who was the CEO of NESTA at the time, and his recognition that creative graduates often produced experimental and innovative work but once in employment produced work that was far more constrained and run-of-the-mill. According to Sian Prime, one of the CPP leaders who led on the content and development of the programme, Puttnam felt that more innovative, risk-taking work that had a high level of thought and care put into it was needed (Prime 2010). The main barrier to this vision for creative graduates was time. CPP was set up to support Puttnam's vision and "explore new types of business models, different kinds of people to run businesses, new types of trainings for creatives to run businesses and new ways to fast track them" (Prime 2010).

CPP was one of NESTA's earliest programmes, which provided financial and development support for, amongst other creative advances, social design in the public sector. The programme ran for three years from 2004 to 2006, and was open for applications for creative graduates who had a business idea. Each year approximately 35 people were successful in gaining a place on the programme, which involved intensive business support, training, and help writing a business plan for which a 'pioneer' could receive up to £35,000 of funding to help them launch a business.

The CPP was very influential in supporting the new design specialisms that were emerging under New Labour for social sustainability; social design, transformation design and service

design. The programme provided funding to a handful of young designers to start businesses that used their skills in new, potentially risky and sometimes unconventional ways within these specialisms. Not only did the programme support designers who had already identified opportunities within socially focused design, but also actively encouraged designers to consider social sustainability as an area in which to work.

In the first year of the programme, the application process was open to creative graduates with an innovative business idea in any field. The programme specified that they were looking for risk takers, people who were commercially driven and people who had a new idea and a new application of their creative talent (Prime 2010). However, the second year of the programme saw a change to the application process. Applicants' creative business ideas had to fit into one of three categories: 'technology', 'new materials' or 'social'.

The reason for the introduction of this social category was discussed in an interview with Sian Prime (Prime 2010). During the first year of the programme, a pioneer had received funding for a design agency that would "develop a patient-centred service design and communication practice that specialised in health matters". This social application of design was perfectly timed as organisations such as the Design Council and the NHS Institute of Improvement and Innovation were identifying how to innovate in the public sector at this time (as is discussed in more detail on page 92).

NESTA's funding of this agency (Thinkpublic), and the interest surrounding it, influenced the creation of the 'social' category for the following programme years. Prime acknowledged that the CPP board, on which John Sorrell, David Kester and Michael Bichard sat, also influenced the formation of a social category.

John Sorrell founded and ran the design business Newell and Sorrell, was chair of The Design Council (1993 – 2000) and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (2004 - 2010), and created the London Design Festival. He set up the Sorrell Foundation in 1999 "with the aim of inspiring creativity in young people and improving the quality of life through good design" (Sorrell Foundation 2011).

David Kester was appointed Chief Executive of the Design Council in May 2003, where he has "refocused the organisation as the national strategic body for design, leading central government policies and regional programmes that strengthen competitiveness, drive innovation and support growth in the creative economy" (Design Council 2011). Prior to the Design Council Kester spent nine years as Chief Executive of Design and Art Direction (D&AD, a charity which exists to promote excellence in design and advertising) and four years with Friends of the Earth. "He is a council member of the Royal College of Art and The Royal Society of Arts, a trustee of the Kingston Rose Theatre, board member of the Design Business

Association and regular commentator and advisor to government on the creative economy, enterprise and innovation” (Design Council. "David Kester" 2011).

Michael Bichard became the *Director of the Institute for Government* in September 2008. From the 1980's through to 2001, Bichard held a number of important roles in the civil service. After leaving the Civil Service he was appointed *Rector of The London Institute* in 2001, and became the chair of the Design Council in 2008.

Prime said “if you look at the type of things those three men have gone on to do, and the types of things that they were doing, you can see that the board was feeding us external messages in relation to design for social challenges” (Prime 2010). Prime cited another reason for the introduction of the ‘social’ category to the programme: the realisation that funding approximately thirty businesses each year through the CPP was not going to have much effect on the creative economy, which was one of its original aims. As Prime points out:

We knew that we were going to create companies that could employ 20 people, not companies that could employee 50 people. So I guess we knew that in terms of saving the economy, that wasn't going to happen, so we had to find the other value of people with creative minds. I guess that made us think more deeply about why would we put this much investment in creative individuals, and that was because you could impact society positively. Now that could be through direct intervention, or it might be more fluffy, aesthetics stuff (Prime 2010).

Not only had NESTA provided £35,000 for each Creative Pioneer that they chose to fund, they also they paid for expert mentoring, two weeks of business development, and the running of the whole programme. The cost of investment was high, and showing a rate of return for the investment was problematic. However, turning the focus of the programme from financial return on investment to social return on investment was a valuable change of direction.

I think it was that we recognised that we weren't going to win the economic argument for our work, so we had to look for a social argument and we were clearly at a time that we were in an economic down spiral and social problems were going up (Prime 2010)¹⁹.

Simply by introducing the ‘social’ category, CCP had a direct impact on the creative graduates applying. From personal experience, this category shaped their business ideas. Finding work in the creative industries is difficult; there are more graduates each year than there are jobs

¹⁹ When receiving sign off from the quotes used with in this thesis. Sian Prime asked to add in a section in hindsight – “we were wrong to lose confidence about not making a financial impact, and that recent acquisitions of some of the Pioneer businesses shows that we may not have created high growth businesses, but we have created some with a financial return, all of them are making a profit and all are making a social return on the investment we made.”

available. Starting up a business is even harder, so an opportunity to apply for advice and funding is rare, and tweaking an existing idea, or creating a new one to fit into one of the three categories is appealing.

In addition to the CPP board, the programme employed some very influential mentors for the pioneers. Service design agency Live|Work and Colin Burns were both employed by the programme to provide practical advice and knowledge from the world of work. Colin Burns was involved with setting up RED, a section of the Design Council focused on using design for social sustainability (see page 90) and Live|Work at the time was focused on leading the service design 'movement'. In 2003 when the programme started, Live|Work had only been running for two years, and the concept of service design was still relatively unknown. They were asked to help the programme because of the techniques that they were using to design services, which were identified, by the programme as business modelling techniques. As Sian Prime recalls:

Hugo [Manassei – CPP founder] came in and said Live|Work does this thing that is really interesting. We were interested that they were designers that weren't making stuff. They were the first influencers of the programme and they really shaped it in terms of how to engage with the end users, how to make things tangible (Prime 2010).

As can be seen from this first review of a key programme in the development of design for social sustainability, there are many interlinking networks and associations. There is a handful of influential names that will be mentioned time and again, and in different capacities, throughout the rest of this thesis.

In 2003, at the end of the first year of the programme, John Thackara hosted a conference, *Doors of Perception*, in India, which asked: What infrastructures are needed to enable bottom-up, edge-in social innovation? And how do we design them? (Doors of Perception 2011). NESTA asked him to look at a group of the Creative Pioneers, who were regarded as starting-up service design firms (including Deborah Sezbeko of Thinkpublic), and set them a brief to examine the potential for patients with long-term health conditions to co-produce and then lead their own 'journey of care' for their treatment (Doors of Perception 2011)²⁰. The group would travel to India to present their ideas and NESTA would fund the event.

Thinkpublic was the only business during the first year of the CPP that focused on design in the public sector, but through NESTA providing briefs, such as the one for Doors of Perception,

²⁰ Thinkpublic's ideas in response to the brief was a pilot scheme, called "Strip", to create a cadre of Health Guides. People from within three ethnic communities will be enabled to signpost the way for local people to access services more appropriately. The idea is to involve local people in bridging language and cultural barriers that prevent local people from knowing how to access services, and to relieve current bottlenecks in the system that result from misinformation.

showed embryonic companies how to shift their focus. The brief provides a clear example of how **collaborative** approaches were required to tackle social challenges, and from an extract taken from the Doors website, design is alluded to as the discipline which will deliver the work (Doors of Perception 2011).

As Prime sums up, NESTA's identification of co-design as a process within service design was a key catalyst for its use more widely in the public sector. Through the promotion of design in social innovation and the collaborative skills that the design industry was developing, a comprehensive offer was emerging from the design industry for the public sector.

NESTA provided funding for agencies to develop a business offer for the public sector and provided them with a platform through projects such as *Doors of Perceptions*, and relationships with organisations such as *NHS Modernisation Agency*, enabling them to build a portfolio that demonstrated what co-design could achieve.

So, I guess NESTA was an intervention in the market at that point. We funded them [Doors of Perception] slightly to do the project and we funded Deborah [founder of Thinkpublic] to manage the project. And really it was one of the things that helped her with Thinkpublic (Prime 2010).

6.4 Promoted examples of co-design being used to address social challenges

The link between design and social innovation had been made and a handful of design agencies (as mentioned in chapter 5) were developing human-centred, participatory approaches within social sustainability design specialisms (social design, service design or transformation design). It was this approach that the public sector were seeking in their service reform and health improvement work, and was therefore apparent that design agencies had a feasible and innovative offer for them. However in the early stages there were no examples of how design could deliver on a project that addressed social sustainability and therefore potential public sector clients were unaware and unable to commission such work.

The Design Council, NESTA and other non-departmental public bodies had to create demonstration projects that raised awareness and increased interest in co-design in order to create demand for the approach. The most influential organisations to take on this role and devise demonstration projects are explored below.

6.4.1 RED (2004 - 2006)

Mid way through the *Creative Pioneer Programme* (2005), the Design Council set up the design team RED, to “tackle social and economic issues through design led innovation” (RED 2011).

RED described itself as a 'do tank' that develops new thinking and practice on social and economic problems through design-led innovation (Cottam and Leadbeater 2004). RED devised and tried to promote a name for the socially focused work that they were carrying out within the public sector. 'Transformation Design' was the result and a paper *RED Paper 01* was written about it outlining the characteristics (Cottam and Leadbeater 2004). The paper also highlighted that few existing designers were equipped to work in this field and it became a call to action for all designers, and 'non-designers', to join RED in developing transformation design as discipline.

Transformation design never caught on as a phrase, but not for a want of trying. Colin Burns, when mentoring my firm Uscreates on the Creative Pioneer Programme, informed us that we were 'transformation designers' and that it was a new growing discipline. For a few months we called ourselves transformation designers, before realising that the name did not accurately describe what we were doing or explicitly explain that we were using design to address social challenges. There was also a realisation that the only people talking about transformation design were part of RED.

Although the term 'transformation design' did not spread, the work that RED produced was key in broadening the debate and promotion of using co-design as a method to address social challenges. The work was presented through the Design Council and consisted of projects addressing health, democracy and energy consumption. Health projects included 'activmobs' (RED 2011), for Kent County Council, which supported the formation of groups of people ('mobs') to get and stay active, and also 'agenda cards' for diabetics, a tool that allowed patients to set the agenda for their consultation, and in doing so reframe the interaction between patients and health professionals. RED's work contributing to the rebuilding of public faith in the democratic process involved finding out what MPs could do differently in their constituency. RED worked with 15 MPs through design workshops and shadowed the constituency office for Doncaster North for a week. This resulted in a report called *Ten Practical Things every MP can do to Rebuild Democracy in their Constituency* (RED 2006). Thus RED were not only trialing transformation design and co-design processes, but also advocating it to a range of public sector organisations to secure them as partners.

RED's interdisciplinary team of designers, policy analysts and social scientists were and still are very influential in the design world²¹. Many had strong links with government and were able to

²¹ The Director of RED was Hilary Cottam, who in 2005 won the award of UK Designer of the Year provoking much debate as she had not trained as a designer, yet had worked on a 're-think' of the prison system and a new approach to designing schools. Prior to RED she founded two companies and worked for the World Bank in the states.

Colin Burns was a Design Associate of RED, and had previously been the Managing Director of IDEO London. Burns was brought in as a mentor for the Creative Pioneer Programme, and it was his advice which prompted the founders of Uscreates to think about a design business which did not necessarily design things, but design ways of doing things and services.

promote the new design specialism to the public sector. Charles Leadbeater, a Policy Associate of RED, had previously worked as an adviser to the *Downing Street Policy Unit*, and Hilary Cottam had worked on the redesign of prison systems. It was credentials like these that meant the public sector organisations listened and took note of the new design specialism. Had it been a designer promoting the work, there probably would not have been the same reception for co-design, or willingness to consider how designers could work with local governments and the NHS.

Emily Campbell, Head of Design at the RSA, echoed these thoughts:

Using co-design for social projects was a difficult concept to grasp for government because people couldn't grasp the idea of design being more than transport vehicles and litterbins - the obvious physical interpretations of design. It was when Hilary Cottam came along and somehow she was able to illustrate this idea of public service and design. She managed to expediently use the arguments of design and design thinking. She doesn't talk like a designer; she doesn't really use design language at all and she doesn't have a design training. But even though she isn't able to talk about design in the classical sense, she was remarkably able to make sense of the potential of design to help the public sector (Campbell 2010).

6.4.2 NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement (2005 -)

The NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement (NHS Institute) was established as a Special Health Authority and was an arm's-length body sponsored by the Department of Health to "transform healthcare for patients and the public by rapidly developing and spreading new ways of working, new technology and world class leadership" (Institute for Innovation and Improvement 2011).

Along with NESTA and the Design Council, the NHS Institute set up projects that demonstrated the role of design in addressing social challenges. More specifically Lynne Maher, the Interim Director for Innovation, was influential in understanding the link between design and innovation and demonstrating it. As with Cottam and Leadbeater at RED, Maher is not a designer but a public sector employee who could communicate the value of using design for social innovation

Charles Leadbeater, a Policy Associate of RED had worked as an adviser to the Downing St Policy Unit, where Geoff Mulgan (head of the Young Foundation was the Director) and is a Senior Research Associate with Demos – an independent thinktank. He also has a working relationship with the design agency IDEO where he advises on innovation strategies.

Matthew Horne, the head of RED, also worked at Demos and as a strategist within government. He now works at the Innovation Unit as a Managing Partner.

Jennie Winhall, a Senior Design Strategist, was the only senior member of the RED team who had a design background. She previously worked for a range of design consultancies worldwide.

to potential commissioning organisations. Her journey to understanding the role of design in innovation, and then becoming an advocate for it, is described below.

In 1998 New Labour provided generous funding for health improvement and as a result the Modernisation Agency was formed in 2001, consisting of approximately 900 people. The Modernisation Agency worked on national programmes for improving patient choice and options. The agency was aware of the potential of using design, as they had been one of the partners in the brief that the *Creative Pioneer Programme* had set examining the potential for patients with long-term health conditions to co-produce and then lead their own 'journey of care'.

In 2005 the department was disbanded following the *Arm's Length Bodies Review* (Department of Health 2005) and very shortly after a new organisation, the NHS Institute of Innovation and Improvement, was formed. Maher was appointed as Director for Innovation and Design. As innovation was in the title of the agency, Maher explored exactly what this might mean for the organisation and discussed this with many organisations including design agencies like IDEO and organisations like NESTA. The examples of the work she saw and the methods being used resulted in a realisation that there had to be "a focus on innovation in internal process and practice" not just on the outcome (Maher 2009). In light of this the Improvement and Innovation team was started with this focus.

Their first job was to identify "what the NHS process of working would be if it was to be innovative" (Maher 2009). Maher commissioned IDEO to help and was impressed by their approach, so, following a paper from the Health Care Commission entitled *Creating a Patient-led NHS: Delivering the NHS Improvement Plan* (Great Britain 2005b) used this new approach to design a new way of working with patients so that they helped staff to co-design health care services and processes.

In *Creating a Patient-led NHS: Delivering the NHS Improvement Plan*, Maher wrote design briefs to examine the reality of a patient-led NHS, and the benefits and implications. She approached NESTA and they suggested four young entrepreneurial that could answer briefs on topics such as obesity and diabetes. The companies included Thinkpublic, Teko, designMATTER and Design Heroine. Following Thinkpublic's involvement, Maher continued to work with them to look at how design could be used to better engage with a range of health service challenges.

A result of this work was the NHS Institute's *Experience Based Design* (EBD), which used co-design principles to address a range of challenges within the NHS, such as service redesign and putting patients and their experiences at the heart of the process. EBD includes a series of workshop plans, a guide to the design concepts, and case studies that NHS staff can use as a

toolkit (full case study on page 156). It was developed by the NHS Institute and Thinkpublic, who had already started to create training programmes with academic research organisations for NHS staff “to teach them how to be designers and how to work together” (Szebeko 2011).

Deborah Szebeko of Thinkpublic, thinks that EBD work was not only a real turning point for her business but also for the public sector in understanding about what design could do:

They [*NHS Institute*] now sell that product across the world and people still talk about it. There are challenges with it, mainly putting a co-design process in the public sector, but the NHS has employed design managers to help. It's had such a national impact but it has also changed relationships about how service improvement is done with patients, rather than them sitting on a panel they are now design partners. I think that's really important – that subtle shift in mindset. (Szebeko 2011)

The EBD toolkit is an interesting demonstration of the design industries' place in social innovation and, specifically the use of co-design. The toolkit provided an explanation of co-design and why it should be used in the NHS, and each time it was used, it produced another example of how co-design could be used to create innovative solutions for service reform and health improvement.

The work the NHS Institute commissioned, as a result of EBD and other projects, was substantial and a procurement roster was put together to enable working with design agencies like Thinkpublic, Martin Boncroft, Live|Work, Engine and Impact. Like many of the other non-departmental public bodies reviewed in this chapter, NHS Institute commissioned or funded designers directly. They also developed a role as ‘broker’ between designers and healthcare providers. Deborah Szebeko believes that Thinkpublic's work with the NHS Institute and approximately 20 other NHS teams helped to grow the market in the health service by demonstrating the role of co-design (Szebeko 2011).

6.4.3 DOTT 07 (2006 - 2007)

The industrial revolution gave us miraculous products, but we produced them in wasteful and polluting ways – and still do. Eighty per cent of the environmental impact of today's products, services and infrastructure is determined at the design stage. [...] We made some bad mistakes. But we can fix them. This is where Design of the Time comes in. This year-long festival of social and economic innovation will formant a new industrial and social revolution – and speed up the transition to sustainability (DOTT 07).

The DOTT programme was set up by the Design Council in 2006 to explore how designers could involve and actively engage communities and individuals in design projects for greater social and environmental sustainability. When the programme was devised, the plan was for the DOTT programme to move to a new region in the United Kingdom every two years over a decade, drawing on the experiences and lessons learnt from the previous places. Where the NHS Institute work promoted co-design within the health service, DOTT did the same for local government and the voluntary sector.

DOTT evolved from Richard Florida's work on the creative class. In his two books, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2003) and *The Flight of the Creative Class* (2006) he maintains that creative communities build economic prosperity. David Kester of the Design Council believed in this idea and promoted it in different regions in the UK (Szebecko and Tan 2009). One North East was a regional development body that understood Kester's vision and together they formed DOTT 07, which consisted of year-long community projects to explore what life in a sustainable region could be like, and how design could play a role. Essentially the Design Council and One North East created a low risk playpen for designers involved in public commissions.

London has a high concentration of designers, and is a region for the creative industries, growth and economic prosperity. Little of the rest of the UK possesses this. Part of the DOTT programme's work was about building the same type of creative community that London enjoys, and greater economic prosperity, in the North East of the UK.

When DOTT 07 started, we envisaged a bold public showcase for design. It would excite, galvanise and inspire people across a whole region. It would involve them too, making them active participants in design processes rather than passive consumers. And it would leave lasting benefits, attracting national attention to design's role in creating sustainable communities and improving everyday life (Design Council. "What Was DOTT 07").

The DOTT 07 programme was funded by the Design Council and One North East, as well as NESTA and the *Creative Pioneer Programme*. In 2006, when DOTT 07 was in the process of being set up, NESTA provided the programme funding in return for trial projects on which some of the Creative Pioneers could work. NESTA was involved because their ideas about increasing the UK's capacity for innovation (reflected in setting up of the Creative Pioneer Programme), had evolved to now included "stimulating innovation in response to major social issues" (DOTT 2007). NESTA's investment was also a good way for some of the early Pioneers "to put their instinct into practice", as Sian Prime put it (Prime 2010)²².

²² The three Creative Pioneers chosen to work on the collaborative projects were Zest Innovation, Blockwork and Design Heroine Architecture. The work that they carried out consisted of initial research into three potential projects to take forward with further funding from DOTT. Zest Innovation, who believed that 'working with you rather than for you is

Like the Creative Pioneer Programme, DOTT 07 was very influential in supporting and guiding design agencies to use co-design to address social challenges. It provided work for many of the newly created social design agencies (such as Zest Innovation and Thinkpublic), supported young service design agencies (Engine and Live|Work) and encouraged existing designers to use a collaborative approach to design and work in the social research field (such as *Design Options* and *Cornerstone Strategies*).

DOTT not only demonstrated the role of design in addressing social sustainability to the public sector, but also to the design industry. DOTT's participatory approach was referred to as co-design, and its role in the work to address social sustainability was demonstrated through the delivery of the project and through the Programme Director, John Thackara, who had worked with the Creative Pioneer Programme as an advisor and set up Doors of Perception.

Design of the Time is not about telling people in the North East how to live. On the contrary; its purpose is to enable local people – interacting with inspiring and visionary guests from around the world – to develop their own visions and scenarios (DOTT 07).

Collaborative methods of working were only one of many elements of the programme that DOTT 07 was exploring and demonstrating. There were also public engagement, service design, social design and innovation, increasing capabilities through design, building a culture of design in the North East and design's role in creating a sustainable region. All of these areas were relatively new concepts, or at least new in the context of the North East. It was ambitious and at times difficult to communicate to designers, the public and social sector and especially local communities in the North East what DOTT actually aimed to achieve.

The Creative Pioneer Programme, the RED programme at the Design Council, and the introduction of the concept of public sector innovation, enabled the design industry to understand why DOTT was being developed. For the local communities in the North East, who were on the receiving end of the 'design' projects, it was more difficult to grasp. In hindsight DOTT 07 seemed to be torn between its origins (exploring a new use of *design* to create a sustainable region) and the outcomes that focused on engaging *communities* to create a sustainable region.

the key to creating better services' worked on a project called Low Carb Lane, which was later delivered by Live|work. The project aimed to explore how homes could reduce their carbon footprint, yet still maintain a warm and comfortable place to live. Blockwork, 'an architectural service which acts as an intermediary between communities and property developers', worked on a project called Our New School (that was later delivered by Engine) which worked with a local school in the North East as part of the government's Building Schools for the Future Programme. Design Heroine Architecture, 'an architecture and consultancy studio specialising in user participation and co-design of public buildings and spaces', worked on a project investigating the experience of people affected by Alzheimers. This project was later delivered by Thinkpublic.

The difficulty of explaining the role of design to create sustainability became apparent when I was interviewing the Programme Director, John Thackara and asked: 'how would you describe the projects that are going on?' His response was "broadly speaking, communities exploring ways to make their lives more sustainable".

There was no mention of 'design' in his answer and this was queried.

Design is a means to an end, and all these things make no sense unless you have an end that is in some way or other significant, or turns you on, or motivates you. Everything in DOTT 07 has been about: "What are the questions that are important to the people of this region that will motivate them to do a project?" In none of those stages do we say 'and by the way, do you think design is wonderful?', because they would say 'well, not particularly'" (Thackara 2008).

The point that design is a means to an end, that the end is social sustainability, and that for DOTT 07 this means specifically sustainable communities, is a valid one. However this does not explain why design was not mentioned in Thackara's description of the programme, as it clearly had a role to play. Having the word 'design' in the title of the programme - **Design Of The Time** - is an obstacle when the projects are not producing classic design outcomes. According to John Thackara, his solution was to leave the word 'design' to one side and look for questions that already motivate people. Then the exploration of those questions became an opportunity to bring in some design expertise later on.

At the start of DOTT 07, design was promoted in communities with the strap line 'Who designs your life?' This was intended to make the public question everything that they use, from products to services, however it seems a relatively cryptic message for the general public, who have not thought about design as applying to anything more than fashion, furniture and cutlery. Joe Heapy from Engine pointed out:

I think that it [the use of the word design] has been a problem in DOTT 07 and there was a moment when they decided that it was all about sustainability because there was a panic about 'how are we going to communicate this to people of the North East'. It's a big old mix of white, middle class designers trying to address social issues. It's just going to make no sense to anybody. There was originally a communications campaign that was designed around the question 'who designs your life?' which was put on buses and driven around Newcastle, but it never appeared in the final exhibition, as far as I could see. I thought it was an interesting question, and the answer that we would have liked to have given is 'well

you do.’ I thought that this was the conversation DOTT 07 was trying to have with the public (Heapy 2009).

DOTT 07 shaped the market in many ways, through the work that they provided to design agencies, the publicity that they gave service design and participatory methods, and through the debates and conversations that emerged from it. DOTT 07 promoted service design and co-design in the public and social sectors nationwide. The projects would have been very difficult to set up without the DOTT programme and the backing they had from the Design Council, NESTA and government. The many subsequent projects that were commissioned by public and third sector organisations would not have happened without having these case studies to demonstrate what sustainable design agencies could bring to the table, how they could improve public engagement and ‘re-design’ public services and programmes.

6.4.4 DOTT Cornwall (2010 - 2011)

The most recent project (2010) that is a source of work for design agencies and continues to demonstrate, promote and support co-design for social sustainability is DOTT Cornwall. DOTT Cornwall is the second DOTT programme, following DOTT 07, promoting the message that “great design can bring about lasting benefits for the people of Cornwall” and that “world class design thinking” projects are being run which explore how “design can help create a more sustainable and inclusive society” (DOTT Cornwall 2011).

One main difference between DOTT 07 and DOTT Cornwall is the emphasis on using more designers local to the area. One of the aims of DOTT 07 was to create a market for design in the North East, but there was little success, and it still remains that the majority of designers working in this market are London-based. Although many of these London design agencies are still being commissioned by DOTT Cornwall to work on the projects, a bank of local Cornish designers have also been sought to work with these agencies. The Cornish agencies²³ were not originally using ‘co-design’, and few were working in the social sustainability field, but through the previous case studies and the financial input from DOTT Cornwall, the agencies have either adapted their methods of working, or adopted the term ‘co-design’. This was highlighted by Robert Woolf of Sea Communications, one of the Cornwall-based design agencies:

I’ve never much been one for terms so I didn’t use words like co-design pre-DOTT and I can’t recall being aware of that specific term either. Much of that (a part of my general ignorance!) is probably due to the fact that I/we never really saw ourselves as designers pre-DOTT.

We followed a process very similar to the DOTT/Design Council methodology, but we didn’t previously use terms like co-discovery, co-design etc, because from our

²³ Such as Sea Communications and LEAP media, who design print, brand and interactive materials.

point of view the co- bit was obvious. Just common sense. We were very aware of participatory approaches.

On reflection though, I think it has helped us to use a common language like co-design and also to accept that if other people call us designers, then perhaps that's all that really matters. In other words, although it's pigeonholing us slightly at least it helps to explain our proposition more clearly (Woolf 2011).

These agencies are now talking the 'DOTT' talk about co-design, having used it in the projects that they have led. They are also contributing to the portfolio of case studies in the social design field and building public sector knowledge about the benefit of design. Like DOTT 07, DOTT Cornwall is acting as an intermediary body between design agencies, local councils and the *European Regional Development Agency*.

There is now a 'DOTT design process', which consists of the following stages; diagnosis, co-discovery; co-design; co-development; co-delivery and legacy. DOTT and the Design Council describe this approach as 'a 'bottom-up' approach, encouraging both professionals and the public to share ideas and to have greater ownership of the solutions.

While the client puts the goals and resources on the table and the designer brings creative expertise, it is the insight of the end-user that leads to the creation of sustainable answers that become embedded in the community (Design Council 2011b).

The DOTT design process is discussed in more depth in chapter 8.

In the March 2011 edition of the magazine *Design Week*, a supplement called *Common Sense* reviewed the DOTT Cornwall programme and its achievements over the two years. Co-design is regularly referred to as part of the legacy of the programme, and is given as much weight, if not more, as the impact of the projects themselves, which raises questions regarding the success of the outcomes as opposed to its aims and methods. Surely the impact of a project is the chief aim in work that is addressing social problems, not whether co-design is embedded and will be used again. There is no point continually using co-design methodologies if there is little impact created. Andrea Siodmok, DOTT Cornwall's Programme Director even alludes to this in her article *Driving Seat of Change* in the *Common Sense* supplement:

Our various stakeholders (and there are a lot of them) all have one thing in common – they don't care about co-design (many don't even care about design), they're motivated by making a difference, and DOTT was a means to achieve that' (Siodmok 2011:21)

However in another article, DOTT's *Legacy*, she is quoted as saying: "At the highest and most simplistic level DOTT is about experimenting and exploring new ways of increasing participation in creativity and innovation" (Billings 2011:22). It is safe to say that social impact is a difficult thing to measure and it often takes time before real results can be assessed.

Putting to one side the success, or not, of co-design methods (until chapter 13) the DOTT programme has been hugely influential in demonstrating how co-design can be used as a tool for social sustainability and what the deliverable of a project may be.

6.5 Support and encouragement for public sector in using co-design for social sustainability

So far this chapter has outlined how the public sector became aware of the importance of innovation and why design became linked with innovation. It has also shown the support that was available for designers to work in social innovation and how projects were set up to demonstrate how co-design could help achieve innovative solutions to social challenges. The following section provides an overview of the support and encouragement central government made available for local public and social organisations to commission design agencies.

6.5.1 Innovation Nation recommendations (2008)

On the 28th June 2007, the DTI and the Department of Education and Skills were merged into the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), which has since merged into the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. DIUS published the paper *Innovation Nation* in 2008. Public sector innovation reached a peak: "Innovation is as important to the delivery of healthcare and education as it is to industries such as manufacturing, retail and the creative economy" (Great Britain 2008b).

To ensure that the UK's public sector was the most innovative in the world the report published a number of recommendations:

- In order to assist policy makers in understanding the acceptable levels of risk in pursuing innovative policies, the NAO²⁴ will conduct a study that will explore the role of risk in stimulating or stifling innovation in the public sector.
- **The Sunningdale Institute will work with partners to create a Whitehall Innovation Hub, a new partnership of organizations to capture and disseminate learning about public sector innovation.**
- **NESTA will establish a Public Services Innovation Laboratory. Working as appropriate with partners such as the Young Foundation, The Innovation Unit, IDeA, Design Council and Innovation Exchange, the Laboratory will trial new**

²⁴ National Audit Office

methods for uncovering, stimulating, incubating and evaluating the most radical and compelling innovations in public services.

- DIUS will convene a Network of Whitehall Innovators to demonstrate commitment at a senior level of Government.
- **The Design Council will develop and trial an innovation-enabling programme of designing demand for practitioners in the public sector, along the lines of the existing private sector model.**
- DIUS will consider, with the Cabinet office, the value of an extended “power to innovate”, enabling front line staff to explore new ways of delivering high quality services (Great Britain 2008b)

The third and fifth recommendation on the list were realised in the form of NESTA's *Public Sector Lab* and the Design Council's *Public Services by Demand* programme. The creation of these programmes provided an official ‘brokerage’ between the public sector and design and innovation agencies, who were using co-design as part of their toolkit of methodologies.

6.5.2 Public Service Lab (2008 -)

The Lab is designed to test, access and build a body of evidence on how to foster radical new ideas for innovation in the UK's public services. Its initial focus is on funding solutions to urgent social and environmental challenges such as rapidly ageing population, climate change and health (NESTA 2009:6).

NESTA's *Public Service Lab* is currently trialing solutions to social challenges and attempting to scale them up across the country's public services. It supports practical programmes to explore and demonstrate how innovation can improve public services and benefit local communities. The focus is social innovation and collaborative approaches to social challenges, which often involve working with design agencies.

The Lab is currently working on a number of programmes, including *Supporting Social Enterprise*, *Neighbourhood Challenge* and specific topical projects including *Your Local Budget* and *Big Green Challenge*. *Reboot Britain* is another programme which the Lab has supported, which aims to “look at the challenges we face as a country and the new possibilities that a networked, digital world offers to overcome them” (NESTA 2011). Through this programme the design and innovation agency, Sidekick, has been funded to develop a product and system to reduce the cost of mental health care by creating better-timed interventions from professional services, and by encouraging the use of personal social networks and is working with the South London and Maudesley NHS Trust to co-design and pilot the project.

Through the same programme, NESTA's Lab has funded the design agency Participle to develop web-based tools that will support their existing LIFE (building new *Lives for Individuals and Families to Enjoy*) project that has been co-designed with Swindon Borough Council and local families. It has also supported Futuregov (a consultancy using the web to improve the public sector) to work with partners such as Thinkpublic in understanding how children's safeguarding services could be more responsive to the needs of frontline workers and families by using features from social networks.

The Lab programme that is most relevant to co-design is 'Co-Production'. Together with the New Economics Foundation, "An independent think-and-do tank that inspires and demonstrates real economic well-being" (New Economics Foundation 2011), the Lab aims to increase the understanding of co-production and how it can be applied to public services through establishing a network of front-line health and social practitioners in the public sector to discuss their work, approaches and challenges together. The *Public Service Lab* has been, and continues to be, a key catalyst in brokering relationships between public and social sector organisations and design/innovation agencies to address social challenges.

6.5.3 Public Service by Design (2008 -)

Michael Bichard, who joined the Design Council as chairman in 2008, championed the use of design in the public sector. He was aware that design had achieved great work in the private sector, but not in the public sector, and there was a need to shift the balance through practical demonstrations. "Rhetoric does not get you far. You have to show what design can do" (Bichard 2008a).

Emily Thomas was the Special Advisor at the DTI when the review of the 'innovation landscape' was being carried out in 2004. She was asked by the Design Council to lead their public services programmes, called *Public Services By Design* in 2008. This programme was to help "public sector managers build awareness and understanding of how design can help in the process of developing and delivering better public services" (Thomas 2008:3).

Bichard outlined three ways in which design can make public services better:

1. It can redesign the way we deliver our services allowing us to "build or reshape our services around citizens, around clients, around customers."
2. It can help the development of better policy "ensuring that ideas are tested before having scarce resources invested in them on a national basis."
3. "Design can help us in the public services to be more innovative. We need to be conscious that today's problems are just not going to be addressed by yesterday's ideas and yesterday's solutions...we need a whole new approach to policy over the 10 years (Design Council n.d.-d).

Government departments and the design industry may have made the link between design and social innovation, but it had not been made across the board at a local public sector level. Although the Government had published reports on why public sector organisation should use design to innovate, it was not a natural progression for the local service managers, according to Emily Thomas. However through her networking and previous relationships within the DTI, she was able to promote and explain the potential of using design to the public sector.

A lot of the work I was doing in the first few months was going out and demystifying it and putting it into something which made sense. We did a lot of public speaking and having a lot of meetings with cabinet ministers and senior officials. My whole view was that *Public Services By Design* would run for a limited period and then close, but essentially change the way of working and that you would have three different types of output from that:

- have the public sector employing in house designers
- directly commissioning design
- constructing programmes with a design thinking process (Thomas 2010).

In 2009, the *Public Service by Design* programme asked designers to submit information about their skills and expertise in order to develop a database of agencies that could help in developing the work. They were looking for “a diverse team of designers and facilitators who are able to work within the context of the Public Sector to define and articulate challenges, understand and translate user needs and able to share knowledge and skills to co-create solutions with public sector teams”²⁵. It is this programme though which design agencies such as Thinkpublic, Uscreates, Engine and Live|Work received commissions. However this call for help in this area was not only for designers, but also for practising professionals with backgrounds in anthropology, ethnography, sociology and psychology, and acknowledged the importance that user-centred and participatory approaches played in the field of public sector innovation.

6.5.4 Whitehall Innovation Hub (2008 - 2010)

DIUS funded the formation of the Whitehall Innovation Hub in 2008, following the *Innovation Nation* (2008) white paper. The aim of the Innovation Hub was to stimulate innovative practice within Whitehall and local public sector organisations and to “support understanding amongst policy makers as to what public service innovation was about” (Maddock 2011).

Minister of State for Science and Innovation, Ian Pearson said at the time of its launch:

Innovation in the public services will be essential to meeting the economic, social and environmental challenges of the 21st century. The Whitehall Hub for

²⁵ Design specification form, emailed to Uscreates.

Innovation will clearly have an important role to play in building a better understanding of how government can empower front line workers to innovate in response to the expectations of the public (Public Technology n.d).

According to the Director of the Whitehall Innovation Hub, Su Maddock, money from the white paper funded the Innovation Hub to increase civil servants' understanding of their role in public service innovation. Little was published or promoted by the Whitehall Innovation Hub, and Maddock believes this is due to two factors, the small number of people who worked there, and being positioned within the School of Government: "it would have been much better if it had been completely independent, or at the heart of the Cabinet Office or the Treasury" (Maddock 2011).

Due to the size of the Whitehall Innovation Hub, the strategy was to work with people who were already innovating within the civil service. A network of Director General's governmental institutions, who wanted to make a difference and were committed to public sector innovation, was set up. The Whitehall Innovation Hub worked primarily on 'targeted leadership', because "it was a big problem in the civil service at the time" (Maddock 2011) and had been identified through capability reviews that identified the lack of understanding amongst senior civil service of their role in transforming the way the government worked. Maddock believes that in many ways the current Coalition government have adopted this leadership agenda, but with an emphasis on smaller government, rather than more innovative government.

Although the Whitehall Innovation Hub did not directly support and encourage co-design or the design specialisms using it, their partners included the National School of Government's Sunningdale Institute, NESTA's *Public Innovation Lab* and the Design Council. Through these partners, design played a key role of the agenda for innovation, and it was widely envisioned to happen through collaboration.

The Design Council heavily promoted the 'narrative about design', and Maddock believes this was successful because the design language used was politically neutral:

For those of us who were talking the language of engagement and working with staff and users, we were always seen as being politically either of the edge of a different form of democracy, coming out of social movements, it was much more politically challenging, whereas the language of design was actually quite politically neutral and the government liked that. It created a narrative that meant it was intellectually possible for everybody to get in the same room and I don't think there was enough made of that. I don't think the people in design realised that was the case (Maddock 2011).

Throughout this research, there has been no mention of the neutrality of design as a benefit for the public sector and a reason for it to be commissioned. However it appears to be a very plausible, although an unrecognised reason, for why the public sector continues to work with design agencies.

It was particularly useful for the Whitehall Innovation Hub, because it was part of the government, not a non-departmental body, and had less freedom to experiment. There were difficulties for the hub working so closely with Whitehall, especially as there was an internal view that capacity building was not needed. According to Maddock, this is still the case, though this is open to dispute, as much of the current co-design work that is being commissioned under the Coalition has an element of building capacity, even if it is not the focus of the work:

There is the assumption that if someone is given a job, if they don't know how to do it, they shouldn't be there. Whereas the biggest barrier to public service innovation was the lack of capacity in public organisations to be open enough to have the dialogue and reflection to engage in problem solving (Maddock 2011).

During its existence, the hub was noticed by governments in Iceland, Canada, Malaysia, Denmark and Australia and New Zealand, however it was too small and had too little status to promote a more controversial message about innovation, which referred to “viral flow and the significance of leadership capabilities” (Maddock 2011). Although these barriers to innovation were never fully discussed or addressed, the Whitehall Innovation Hub was closed when the Coalition came to power. It remains to be seen whether the party will develop a new framework of support for capacity building in public service innovation.

This chapter has identified the key events and organisations that have supported and encouraged design's involvement in social innovation and a co-design methodology. The organisations included have been key in exploring, funding or supporting co-design for social sustainability. Reviewing these events and non-departmental public sector organisations, who have acted as intermediaries between the public sector and design agencies, it is clear that they have been a catalyst for this new specialism. The intermediaries have funded the exploration of the use of co-design for social change, and through the programmes that they have created they have not only provided the financial support through start-up funding of design agencies, but have acted as brokers²⁶ to set-up projects in the public sector, and also commissioned work from them directly.

²⁶ This act of brokering commissions has been most important, as the design agencies alone would have had a far more difficult task of seeking out potential clients and 'selling' their unconventional use of design to them. Other acts of brokering the relationships, as Bichard (2008a) pointed out, was the negotiation of Intellectual Property on behalf of the designer and implementation processes as “individual designers can't start hammering away at procurement systems”.

SECTION 2

THE PRACTICE OF CO-DESIGN AS A METHOD FOR PROMOTING SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY UNDER NEW LABOUR

The previous section discussed the emergence of co-design as a method for social sustainability. It has identified that through New Labour's implementation of Local Agenda 21, a participatory environment for public sector work was initiated and future agendas ensured that this remained a focus. It also identified that the specialism of 'sustainable design' transformed into a number of different guises under New Labour, and was using co-design as a method to address social challenges. Finally it reviewed the programmes, events and agendas that introduced co-design as a method to the public sector and aided its initial commissioning.

This section looks at the practice of co-design under New Labour, the specific areas in which it was commissioned, which public sector bodies commissioned it and what the deliverables of these commissions were. It also attempts to identify the qualities that designers have been bringing to collaborative work.

CHAPTER 7

THE COMMISSIONING OF CO-DESIGN

This chapter provides a historical context and reviews the specific areas within the field of social sustainability in which co-design was, and still is, commissioned.

7.1 Areas of co-design commission

Co-design allowed the public sector and the design industry to work together, providing a shared vision of how to work on projects relating to social sustainability. However public sector clients were not initially commissioning 'co-design', but projects for which a participatory approach was desired. There were three main categories that this approach was commissioned for:

1. Public engagement
2. Public service reform
3. Health improvement

7.2 Public engagement

Many of the initiatives launched by New Labour had the theme of inclusion and public involvement, for instance, *New Deal for Communities* (Great Britain 2008a), which aimed to develop self-help and capacity building within communities, the *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* (Great Britain 2000c) and the '*Urban White Paper*', *Our Towns and Cities: The Future - Delivering an Urban Renaissance* (Great Britain 2000e). However they did not explicitly guide local public sector organisations on how to engage and involve the public. This was addressed through documents such as *Enhancing Public Participation in Local Government* (Great Britain 1998b) and *Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People* (Great Britain 1998c)

Despite this guidance, it seemed that many local governments and local NHS teams were still unsure as to the most effective ways to implement the advice and engage the public. The uncertainty resulted in the work being outsourced to private agencies, including design agencies that were promoting co-design methods.

Another factor that led to the outsourcing of engagement work was 'a systematic failing in the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of citizens in relation to democracy' (Barnett 2002 ; Pratchett 1999) due to their mistrust of politicians. Three distinct problems for community engagement were identified by Sullivan et al. through a number of interviews with council employees. First, a "widespread ignorance of local authority structure and responsibilities" (Sullivan et al. 2006:496) on the part of the public. Second, there was difficulty in engaging a wide enough range of the public at consultative events. Essentially the 'usual suspects', those who are often vocal in the community, attended such events, and the 'hard to reach', whom the public sector most needed

to engage, did not. Many local council networks admitted that they had failed to build an alliance that represented a genuine cross-section of the community (Lafferty 2001:121). The third problem was that some authorities “seem trapped in a dysfunctional consultative relationship with their communities” (Sullivan et al. 2006:497). These authorities were likely to have an unpopular agenda, e.g. pulling down a community building, and would hold a public consultation. The public could not change the plan, but the authority still claimed to want to ‘hear their voice’. In these situations, where the authority was only paying lip service to engagement, the community became disillusioned.

This third problem highlights that the term ‘engagement’ was being practiced in a number of different ways by civil servants. For some it meant the act of gathering the thoughts and opinions of the public to inform their own work. For others it meant the active involvement of the public in decision-making. When New Labour came to power and implemented LA21, there was a transition from the Conservatives’ consultative approach to engagement, to a more collaborative way of working. The different levels of engagement were not explicit during this transition between parties and it was not until 2004, when New Labour’s Office of the Deputy Prime Minister produced a report entitled *LSP [Local Strategic Partnership] Evaluation: Community Engagement Action Learning Set Report* (Great Britain 2003b), that there was any clarification between research, consultation, participation and delegation.

The report outlined the work of an ‘action learning set’²⁷, which consisted of ten Local Strategic Partnerships that included emerging themes on community involvement. Within the report, there is reference to an engagement spectrum, an adaptation of Sherry Arnstein’s ladder of participation (see page 66).

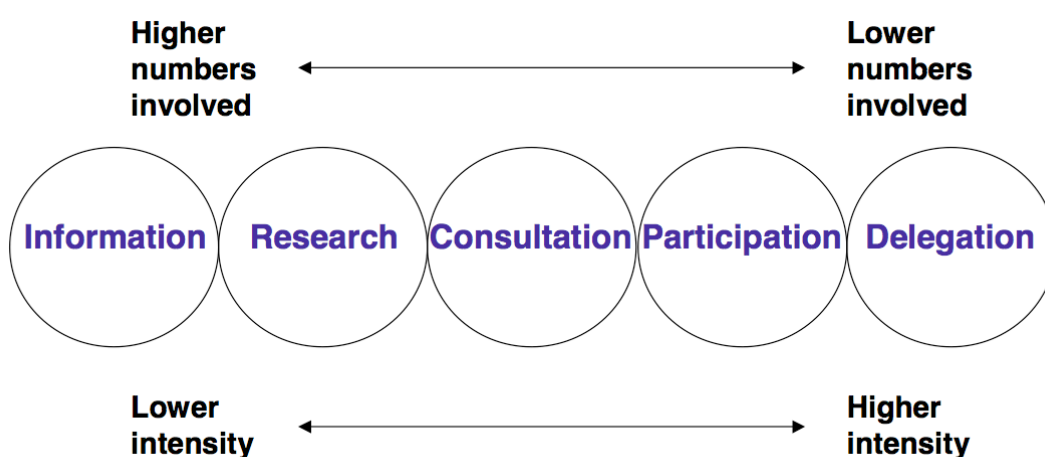


Figure 4. *The Engagement Spectrum, after Arnstein (Great Britain 2003b).*

²⁷ Action learning is a process where participant reflect of their actions and experiences in order to improve future performance. The learning is done in small groups called action learning sets.

The report uses the engagement spectrum as:

an attempt to formalise different ways of thinking about community involvement. From giving information to a large number of people (to enable them to make informed decisions) through to asking for the views of less people (in more or less reflexive ways), to delegating tasks and responsibility (for example inviting them to sit on a partnership board and represent a wider body or community of interest/place). (Great Britain 2003b:6)

As the pressure for civil servants to carry out more intensive engagement grew, more external organisations were commissioned, including designers. This was especially true toward the end of New Labour's governance, when there was a shift in thinking and practice from 'engagement' to 'empowerment' (Great Britain 2008c).

Under New Labour the commitment to involving the public in policy making was developed beyond participating in the process to taking ownership of it. The idea of 'community engagement' was to move from listening to people and acting on the insight, to supporting and encouraging people to work together to achieve change. This vision was set out in the 2007 Policy Review Report, *Building on Progress: Public Services*, that called for government to:

- empower citizens to shape their lives and services
- ensure that providers are more responsive to users' needs; [and]
- create more effective ways for users to express their views ('user voice') and have them acted upon (Great Britain 2007a)

This commitment to *empowering* the public, rather than simply consulting them, continued during New Labour's remaining years in power (and is essentially the basis of David Cameron's idea of the 'Big Society'). It reflected a growing consensus that the state could no longer direct the actions of citizens without their cooperation to address the challenges of modern life (Great Britain 2007a).

In the government's paper, *Real People, Real Power*, Gordon Brown says in his foreword:

In the modern world there are many challenges that cannot be met by central government acting alone – and to address those challenges effectively, we need to harness the energy and innovation of front-line professionals, local government, citizens and communities (Great Britain 2008c).

The foreword continues in this way, talking about 'empowering communities and citizens' and 'strengthening local democracy by increasing local democracy by increasing participation'.

However under New Labour the concept of 'empowerment' remained a goal rather than an achieved vision.

Real People, Real Power was published the same year as a report called *Community Engagement: Some Lessons from the New Deal for Communities Programme* (Great Britain 2008a). Both reports talk extensively about engaging citizens and drawing on their knowledge and expertise in the attempt to address social challenges. They demonstrate the way in which public participation can go further than consultation, making them active players in the programmes:

One of the distinctive features of the New Deal for Communities programme was that communities were to be at the heart of it. This dimension of the programme rests partly on the premise that local people are the real experts about the problem in their communities and about why previous attempted solutions may have failed (Great Britain 2007a:7).

By the time *Putting People First*, which explicitly linked collaborative approaches to designing social and public service change, was written in 2007 co-design was being used in a number of social sustainability projects throughout the public sector. The skills required to 'do' engagement work were far more advanced than holding a public consultation, and not many civil servants possessed them, as Emily Campbell at the RSA, pointed out:

When I think 'how has this happened' [the public sector and civil servants commissioning co-design], the whole social and political agenda of inclusiveness, personalisation and co-production is a huge part of it. Because this agenda means that civil servants are meant to be engaged with the public, and how are they going to know how to do that?! It's always been, this is them (the public) and this is us (civil servants). But designers have lots of experience in engaging users. The cliché designer might not (the one who endows the world with his or her autonomous creation) but the study of user engagement and the concept of user-centric design has been around for a long time now. I think a lot of civil servants know that designers can help them, for example, run a workshop. The civil servants may have all the people in a room, have the flip charts and post-its, but what are they going to do with them? Designers are totally fearless with this type of thing. They think "Well let's just have a go"; they'll come up with exercises for everyone to do, questions to ask and new angles to look at the problem from. They may be quite naive, but they break the ice. Designers tend to be relaxed about working with strangers in this kind of situation and it helps civil servants enter into this slightly intimidating world of public engagement (Campbell 2010).

The qualities that designers bring to engagement work are discussed in-depth in chapter 9, however the key message to take from Campbell is that public engagement is a skill that civil servants began to look to designers to supply.

7.3 Public service reform

If there is a dominant motif in Labour's approach to the conduct of domestic policy, it is 'modernisation' – and its synonym, 'reform'. No set of institutions were more frequently and in a more thorough-going and sustained manner the object of modernisation than the public services (Shaw 2009:1).

When New Labour came to power the need to increase investment in public services was coupled with a need to review the Welfare State, set up fifty years earlier. Its founding principle, to provide a safety net in health, housing and employment for those who needed it, became distorted as the system developed over the decades and encouraged a culture of dependency (Great Britain 2002). The explicit aim of public service reform was to ensure: "that everyone has access to public services that are efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering – and that continually strive to cater to the needs of all citizens" (Shaw 2009:1).

Over the last century there was a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach when it came to services, which were delivered across the country rather than locally tailored. A blanket approach to change resulted in homogeneous services and provision, such as housing and schools, that were a success in some areas of the country and not in others. *Service First* (Great Britain 1998d), a charter programme that aimed to improve service delivery across the public sector, was one of the first initiatives that New Labour launched calling for user-centred services. It was based on John Major's *Citizen's Charter* and included nine principles for service delivery, one of which was to consult and involve the users. The same principle appeared in further government documents produced in the following years, such as *Modernising Government* (Great Britain 1999b), and *Building a Better Quality of Life* (Great Britain 2000a).

In 2002, a paper was produced by the Office of Public Sector Reform called *Reforming our Public Services: Putting Principles into Practice*, which summed up the user-centred principles from previous papers into two key areas:

Choice

In designing services around their customers, it is important to be clear about their requirements. In some cases all customers want pretty much the same service – their bin to be emptied regularly, their street to be swept clear of litter, their train to run on time. In others, they increasingly want to be able to choose the service which best fits their requirements. They might want to choose the GP surgery that

is most convenient for them to get to quickly from home, or alternatively is near their place of work. They might want to be able to choose the hospital with the shortest waiting times or the most experienced specialists. They might want to choose one particular type of school or curriculum over another (Great Britain 2002).

Voice

Wider choice is only one aspect of the policy of reform. The Government has come to believe that greater involvement by individual citizens in public bodies is also needed if public services are to improve. Effective representative institutions, complaints systems and user surveys—all mechanisms for giving users a 'voice'—are also necessary to maintain services that respond to changes in the needs and preferences of users. (Great Britain 2005a:14).

As the concept of tailoring services to individual needs evolved, so did the concept of 'personalisation'. The idea of making a service fit around the user and not the user around the service has been one of the largest shifts in thinking since the Welfare System began. It is envisaged that it could lead to more independence and better outcomes as a result of increased choice and control over the services the public use. There are also potential cost savings as a result of users knowing their own needs and commissioning exactly what they require, rather than experts deciding for them. Due to the complexity of the mechanics of personalisation, it was not adopted within the public sector as quickly as New Labour wanted. Today under the Coalition, personalisation is still a focal point in welfare but it has its critics, who claim that people who need health and social care services are not in a position to know how to use scarce resources responsibly and that there are many risks associated with users managing services at times of crisis or instability (Great Britain 2005a:66).

Sir David Varney's 2006 report, *Service Transformation: A Better Service for Citizens and Businesses, a Better Deal for the Taxpayer*, acknowledged the achievements in the way that services had been delivered in a decade of investment and reform under New Labour, citing the online *NHS Direct*, vehicle registration, and tax returns as particular examples. However Varney also identified the need to improve public service delivery, making it more accessible and efficient for the citizen, as well as more in line with the rising expectations of public service users. We now expect to experience speed, easy access and a joined-up package of public services, and Varney argues that if achieved, it would be beneficial for economic as well as social reasons.

Providing joined-up services designed around the needs of the citizen or business will yield efficiency savings by reducing duplication across the public sector. This ought to be the public service aspiration for Government (Varney 2006:8).

Varney recommended:

Engaging citizens and businesses more fully in the design and delivery of public services, establishing principles that underpin a coordinated multi-channel approach to government delivery and a move to making e-services the primary channel for information and transactional services (Varney 2006:9).

As can be seen from this statement, not only were citizens to be engaged to provide their thoughts and opinions, but also in the design and the delivery of public services. Over the last ten years designers specialising in service design have worked to deliver this model, developing new ideas for housing services²⁸, redesigning employment services to reach and support individuals into work²⁹, redefining service provision and the relationship between local government and residents³⁰ and developing new service offering to increase access to health services for vulnerable groups³¹.

It is important to point out that design agencies were not leading this work, and that service transformation is a complex challenge that requires numerous different professionals to achieve. This was discussed during an interview with Michelle Harrison, CEO of TNS-BRMB, a social research agency for policy makers:

Service transformation itself has huge amounts going on, in terms of back office rationalisation to increase efficiency in the supply chain and understanding the inequalities of the population. So service transformation goes all the way from understanding what the public need, assessing what it is they want, working out where the value lies and then delivering it. Now, design has a lot to do with that delivery end but I don't think designers can run profitability surveys or understand demand. IT has a huge amount to do with service transformation design, but the IT guys don't see themselves as designers. Most of the money being spent on service transformation is being spent on IT (Harrison 2010).

There are many different types designers involved in service transformation, from web-designers, to engineers, to architects, to communication designers, and designers using co-design have a very specific role.

²⁸ Live|work worked with Haringey Council to improve the services it offers to people while they are in temporary accommodation.

²⁹ Live|work worked with Sunderland City Council to explore how the long-term unemployed interact with employment services and to develop innovative ways to reach and support individuals into work.

³⁰ Engine worked with West Sussex County Council to help them to develop their role and relationship with residents, specifically around community access requirements.

³¹ Engine worked with North East Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) decided to develop a new service offering to increase access to essential health services for vulnerable groups.

There are some examples that emerged towards the end of New Labour (when service design practice had become more established) of co-design being used to not only collaboratively design improvements to services, but also gather information to rethink the services at a strategic level: how they were commissioned, what they provided and how they functioned. For example, the service design agency Engine worked with Barnett Council to re-design the way the people centred services were commissioned, which resulted in recommendations for a new commissioning model.

7.4 Health improvement

The New Labour government policy paper *Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation* (Great Britain 1999c) aimed to prioritise health promotion, and shift the focus from individual behaviour change to considering the wider social, economic and environmental determinants of health in health improvement work (Macdonald 2003:25).

The World Health Organisation's Ottawa Charter provides a definition of health promotion from the first international conference of for health promotion:

Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. To reach a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, an individual or group must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities. Therefore, health promotion is not just the responsibility of the health sector, but goes beyond healthy life-styles to wellbeing (First International Conference on Health Promotion 1986).

The terms 'health promotion' and 'reducing health inequalities' both come under the broader concept of 'health improvement', whether this is through public health (medicine, dentistry, nursing) or in health promotion. It was the term 'health improvement' that was used as part of the Labour government's modernisation agenda and spread the responsibility for its practice beyond health service agencies to local government and the voluntary sector. This was in recognition that health inequalities result from social inequalities, and to address the former requires action across all the social determinants of health. Partnerships were built across and within public and voluntary organisations, creating a new approach that has been key in developing a wide range of health improvement initiatives that do not focus solely on marketing messages (as health promotion does).

Multi-disciplinary and cross-sectorial partnership working is seen as the key to addressing both the wider determinants of health (such as housing, transport,

education and social exclusion), and a number of more targeted programmes to tackle particular aspects of ill health (such as coronary heart disease, cancer, mental health and accidents) and particular issues such as smoking, teenage pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse and the needs of the ageing population. Healthy schools and health workplace programmes also feature in government plans (NICE 2011).

The *Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation* white paper in 1999 required that all health authorities develop and implement Health Improvement Plans to address local health and social problems and inequalities. To develop the plans, health authorities were expected to work with health service users and providers to identify local needs and create partnerships to address them. The participation and empowerment of local stakeholders, including the public, was viewed as an essential part of the planning process, and of effective local delivery.

Another outcome of the white paper was a three-year initiative to improve health across the country, focusing on the most deprived areas. These were known as Health Action Zones and they were seen as “a trailblazer initiative that would pioneer new ways of driving up local standards of health” (NICE 2011).

In 2000 the Department of Health released *The NHS Plan: A Plan for Investment, a Plan for Reform* with its vision of a health service designed around the patient (Great Britain 2000d). The plan reinforced the importance of tackling health inequalities, and setting targets and budgets in a number of health improvement areas such as:

- child health and nutrition
- teenage pregnancy
- smoking cessation
- drug- and alcohol-related crime
- screening programmes

To work on the NHS targets a diverse range of community and voluntary organisations, as well as government organisations, set up numerous projects and programmes that delivered education, promotion, services and advocacy at a local level. Supporting more holistic initiatives generated by local communities, and involving local people in addressing health inequalities, was seen as a way to develop experimental and innovative projects to meet local health needs.

Health improvement, especially the promotional work, was not only being carried out by design agencies, but by a niche of socially focused marketing and PR agencies, under the banner of social marketing. Social marketing emerged in 1971 with a paper in the *Journal of Marketing*

(Kotler and Zaltman 1971). In the 1980's techniques from commercial marketing were used in health promotion campaigns to change unhealthy behaviour, for example smoking.

Social marketing is defined by the National Social Marketing Centre (NSMC), a non-departmental government body to support the practice, as *“the systematic application of marketing alongside other concepts and techniques to achieve specific behavioural goals, for a social or public good”* (National Social Marketing Centre 2006:4) and works by “influencing specific groups of people to take focused incremental actions which benefit them, their communities and wider society” (Cook 2010a:64).

Social marketing essentially applies techniques from commercial marketing practice (i.e. how to make a product or service appealing to a particular group of people) to influence public behaviours for social good, and to reduce inequalities. It does this through a phase of in-depth research with the target audience, which then guides the development of ideas to tackle the chosen issues. It is a user-centred process, which over the last five years has become more participatory. As the National Social Marketing Centre's report *It's Our Health* points out:

Rather than attempting to sell health, we need to understand why people act as they do and therefore how best to support them. So, alongside providing effective health information and supporting communities and individuals to improve their own health, we need to encourage and release the energy, skills and desire for good health that they already have (National Social Marketing Centre 2006:3).

Co-design is recognised and used in the field of social marketing to deliver a participatory approach to health improvement. Despite the opportunities for design agencies to work under the umbrella of social marketing, there are only two agencies that really do: Thinkpublic and Uscreates. Social marketing agencies which have a background in PR and marketing, such as *The Hub*, now use design language, specifically around co-design and the redesign of health services, in spite of having no previous connection with this area of the design industry. The NSMC's Communications Programme Manager believes that the demand for more collaborative approaches to health improvement has led to many social marketing agencies to offer co-design.

7.5 The public sector bodies commissioning socially focused design agencies

This section reviews which public sector organisations were commissioning design agencies under New Labour, and provides examples of extracts from briefs they issued³² in the areas of engagement, public service reform and health improvement. The commissioning organisations

³² Extracts from the original tenders are from the following sources:

- tenders that Uscreates was invited to respond to
- publicly advertised project tenders.

have been identified from a range of design agencies' 'client' sections on their websites, such as Uscreates, Thinkpublic, Participle, Live|Work and Engine, and can be placed under the following categories:

- Central government
- Local government
- NHS
- Charities
- Non-departmental public bodies

Uscreates' commissioners

NHS

- Birmingham East and North Primary Care Trust
- NHS East London
- NHS Mid Essex
- NHS Stoke-on-Trent
- Norfolk Primary Care Trust
- North East London Mental Health NHS Trust
- South London and Maudsely NHS Foundation Trust

Thinkpublic's commissioners

NHS

- The Luton and Dunstable NHS Trust
- Great Ormond Street Children, NHS Trust
- Whittington University Hospital NHS Trust
- Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Greenwich Primary Care Trust
- Birmingham East and North Primary Care Trust

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Breckland Council
- Greenwich Neighbourhood Renewal
- Portsmouth City Council
- Birmingham Council
- Bridgenorth District Council
- Islington Council
- Lewisham Council
- London Borough of Brent

NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES

- IDeA - Improvement and Development Agency
- British Council for School Environments

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

- The Department for Education and Skills
- The Department of Health

NON DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES

- The National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts
- The NHS Institute of Innovation and Improvement
- Design of the Times 2007 (DOTT 07)
- The Arts Council
- The Design Council

CHARITIES

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Partnerships <p><u>CHARITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Photography • Careers Development Organisation • Tower Hamlets Summer University • Groundworks • The Young Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce • The Alzheimer's Society • Oxley Mental Health • Age Concern • Involve • Time Bank
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Figure 5. Commissioning organisations identified from Uscreates and Thinkpublic's 'client' sections on their websites (December 2010).

7.5.1 Central Government

There were only a few central government departments which commissioned designers for social sustainability work under New Labour: the *Central Office of Information*, the *Department of Health*, the *Department for Children, Schools and Families*, the *Home Office*, the *Department of Work and Pensions*, and the *Cabinet Office*. The example below provides an extract from a brief presented to designers by the *Home Office*. As this brief demonstrates, the majority of work commissioned by central government departments focused on service reform, rather than public engagement or health improvement.

Example: Extract of design brief issued by central government

Client: The Home Office (through the Design Council's *Public Services by Design* programme)

Area for commission: Public service reform

Date: 2009

Project overview

Since its inception in the early eighties 1980s, Neighbourhood Watch has encouraged communities to work together to make an important contribution to reducing crime and fear of crime in the UK. The Home Office is keen to support the continued growth and effectiveness of the schemes.

Neighbourhood Watch is looking to expand its appeal to attract a new generation of membership. To help achieve this we are commissioning a user centred design

project looking at how Neighbourhood Watch schemes are organised, delivered and supported.

This is a request for creative services to design and develop the next generation Neighbourhood Watch service. Potential candidates will be invited to the Design Council to present to members of the Neighbourhood and Home Watch Network and the Design Out Crime team.

The brief

- Design a blueprint for how the national Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) scheme can be developed to appeal to the next generation of NHW members
- Provide a more joined-up service for existing members

The aim is to deliver a vision for the next generation of NHW service that brings it into the digital age and prepares it for the future. This should include recommendations for the full range of tools and services that are used to promote, establish and maintain the organisation. These should cover the full user experience from non-members through to active coordinator roles and how this changes over time. Specific attention should be paid to how NHW can operate more effectively using digital platforms.

7.5.2 Local Government

The Local Councils in the UK are responsible for all areas of governance at a local level. Under New Labour this included:

Motoring Car tax, Learners, Driving licence...	Parents Having a baby, Schools, Childcare...
Education and learning Student loans, University, EMA...	Employment Jobs, Redundancy, Holidays, Pay...
Money, tax and benefits Benefits, Taxes, Benefits adviser...	Young people Money, Work and careers, Leisure...
Home and community Housing, Council Tax, Flooding,	Disabled people Rights, Blue Badge parking, DLA...
Travel and transport Journey planner, Passports...	Pensions and retirement planning State Pension, Planning for retirement...
Caring for someone Carer's Allowance, Working and caring...	Crime and justice Types of crime, Victims, Prevention...
Environment and greener living Saving energy, Recycling, Pollution...	Health and well-being Medical records, Health services, Flu...
Government, citizens and rights Honours, Births, Deaths, Marriages...	Britons living abroad Before you go, Study and jobs abroad...

Figure 6. Responsibilities of Local Council's under New Labour (DirectGov. "Home Page").

The briefs that designers have responded to from local government fell into the commissioning areas of public engagement, and service reform, as the following brief extract demonstrates:

Example: Extract from design brief issued by local government

Client: Waltham Forest Council

Area for commission: Public engagement

Date: 2009/2010

Project overview

The Council's cohesion work is a fundamental part of the Sustainable Community Strategy and our Community Cohesion Strategy and associated Action Plan agreed in 2008, contains a number of high profile and innovative projects aimed at encouraging our diverse communities to come together and provide opportunities for sharing and celebrating the richness of their cultures and building bridges.

The brief

As part of the Action Plan for this year, we are seeking proposals for:

- The development and delivery of 4 "Little Conversations" which bring together residents and/or groups of residents from each of the following priority neighbourhoods, in informal settings, to discuss their views on where they live and identify issues which support or hinder local community cohesion.- Cann Hall/Cathall, Higham Hill/Valley, Leabridge/Markhouse/High Street and Wood Street/Hoe Street.
- We are not prescriptive in terms of how events are developed and welcome innovation, but would expect them to follow the general principles of the Toolkit enclosed with this Specification.

Your proposal should show how you will:

- Identify the participants for each Little Conversation including the process that you would undertake to ensure these are reflective of the target group chosen
 - Engage residents from those communities
 - How the events will be structured and how you will go about soliciting the information from participants
 - Your track record of running similar projects
-

7.5.3 The NHS

Under the category 'NHS', two main organisations have been commissioning design work, at a local level: the Primary Care Trusts and the Acute Trusts.

Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) are responsible for providing primary and community health services, or commissioning them from other providers. These primary and community services are what the public normally use when they first have a health problem, and include general practitioner (GP) services, pharmacies, mental health services, dentists, community health centres. Collectively the 152 PCTs spend the largest amount of the NHS's budget, approximately 80% (NHS 2010). The PCTs are also responsible for ensuring that health and social care services work together and that all services benefit the patient. Preventative health also comes under the PCT remit and therefore many briefs fall into the health improvement category.

Acute Trusts manage the hospitals. They are responsible for the quality of healthcare, hospital budgets, improving hospital services, employing the staff, etc. The need to improve hospital services is also where many of the briefs for designers originate.

Example: Extract from brief issued by a PCT

Client: NHS Hampshire

Area for commission: Health improvement

Date: 2010

Background

The UK still has higher rates of teenage conception than other western European countries. In 1999 the Labour Government launched the National Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and since then steady progress has been made on reducing the under 18 conception rate, which is now at its lowest level for 20 years. In 1998 the national rate was 46.6 per 1000 women aged 15-17 years and in 2008 this figure reduced to 40.5. From 1998 to 2008 there has been a 13.2% reduction in conception rates nationally.

Brief

- To gain greater insight into factors that influence teenage pregnancy in Hampshire
- To help improve knowledge of what helps increase use of contraception amongst teenagers (including analysing what has and hasn't worked well locally and nationally)
- To examine the influence that demographic, social, behavioural and psychological factors have on teenage sexual health

- To develop a range of interventions that could be used by the local authority, NHS and others organisations in Hampshire Teenage Pregnancy Partnership to better meet the sexual health needs of teenagers in Hampshire
-

7.5.4 Charities

Two types of charity have been working with design agencies: large national charities which support a cause, and require public donations, such as Asthma UK and the Alzheimer's Society, and smaller more research based charities, for example, the Young Foundation and the RSA. The briefs that the charities produced covered all three commissioning areas: public engagement, service reform and health improvement.

Example: Extract from brief issued by a charity

Client: Asthma UK

Area for commission: Health improvement

Date: 2009

Overview

Asthma UK is planning to carry out a health promotion project during 2009 to develop self management resources targeting children with asthma in the UK aged 8 -11.

The first phase of the project has been completed internally by Asthma UK and involved an extensive literature review, an analysis of a range of self management resources for children with asthma from across the UK and the development of recommendations for the second phase of the project.

Brief

We would like to work with a consultancy to commence the second phase of the project. This will involve engaging with children with asthma to better understand the type of resources which are effective and appealing, developing a number of draft resources, testing these with children with asthma across the UK so that clear preferences are found and making some final revisions.

Suggested methodology:

- Conduct some initial research with children with asthma aged 8 – 11 exploring the types of self management resources they prefer

- With oversight from Asthma UK health promotion and clinical staff, draft a range of self management resources based on the information gathered by Asthma UK and on the initial research phase of the project
 - Test these drafts with children with asthma in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to identify preferred resources
 - review and amend the chosen resources according to feedback at testing stage produce final resources that Asthma UK will then print and pilot in GP surgeries.
-

7.5.5 Non-departmental public bodies

As can be seen from the brief written by the Home Office, outlined above, the Design Council was involved in the commissioning. Their role included developing the brief and brokering the relationships between the commissioner and design. The Design Council falls under an interesting group of commissioners that includes organisations such as NESTA and the NHS Institute of Innovation and Improvement. They were all funded through New Labour, for example NESTA depends on an Endowment from the Big Lottery, the Design Council is funded through the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), and the Department of Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS), and The Institute of Innovation and Improvement was funded through the Department of Health.

These intermediary, non-departmental public bodies helped set up or finance the work that designers delivered on behalf of public organisations, often as a way of funding experimental projects and trying to raise the profile of this new design practice. Chapter 6 explored the non-departmental public bodies in more depth as they are major players in the work that designers are doing.

As well as supporting public sector organisations to develop briefs and work with design agencies, these bodies have commissioned designers directly to work on projects they lead, in order to demonstrate the value of co-design (as discussed in chapter 6).

Example: Extract from brief issued by a non-departmental public body

Client: DOTT Cornwall

Area for commission: Public service reform

Date: 2010

Overview

DOTT Cornwall is looking for a Senior Producer [SP] to lead our major European 'skills' project. This project seeks to enhance the skills of people in Cornwall so that

they can achieve better paid jobs that are relevant to the 21st Century economy and society.

The successful SP will work with the Programme Director [PD] and Executive Director [ED] at DOTT Cornwall to develop a full proposal for the project.

Brief

We would like you to provide the vision and leadership for the European 'Skills' project working with one or more teams from the DOTT Cornwall design roster and University College Falmouth (UCF) interns to deliver the project.

Deliverables:

- Reviewing and appointing design team/s from the DOTT roster.
 - Developing a joint project proposal for delivering the project.
 - Being an ambassador for the project, including sharing your experience with key stakeholders.
-

This chapter identifies and reviews the three areas in which co-design was commissioned under New Labour: public engagement, public service reform and health improvement. It traces the origins of these areas, and identifies why they were of importance to New Labour in their aim of achieving social sustainability, and why participatory approaches were seen as desirable to achieve them.

The briefs in this chapter do not specifically name co-design as a requirement. In many cases, it is not even a design agency that is requested to fulfill the work. However all the briefs require working with the public in participatory ways to improve social sustainability, and co-design provided a method which could answer the needs of the commissioners. The previous chapter has already provided further understanding of why co-design was commissioned as one of the desired participatory approaches in engagement, public service redesign and health improvement. Essentially, this was due to the government's need to develop services and programmes that would ultimately work for, and be accepted by, the diverse population of the UK. A top-down approach had been used in the past, but a more collaborative and user-centered approach to social sustainability was seen as a way to not only reach the people that needed to be engaged in the development of new programmes and services, but also as a potential way to generate and develop innovative outcomes. The outcomes, or deliverables, of co-design being used in engagement, service redesign and health improvement are discussed in following chapter.

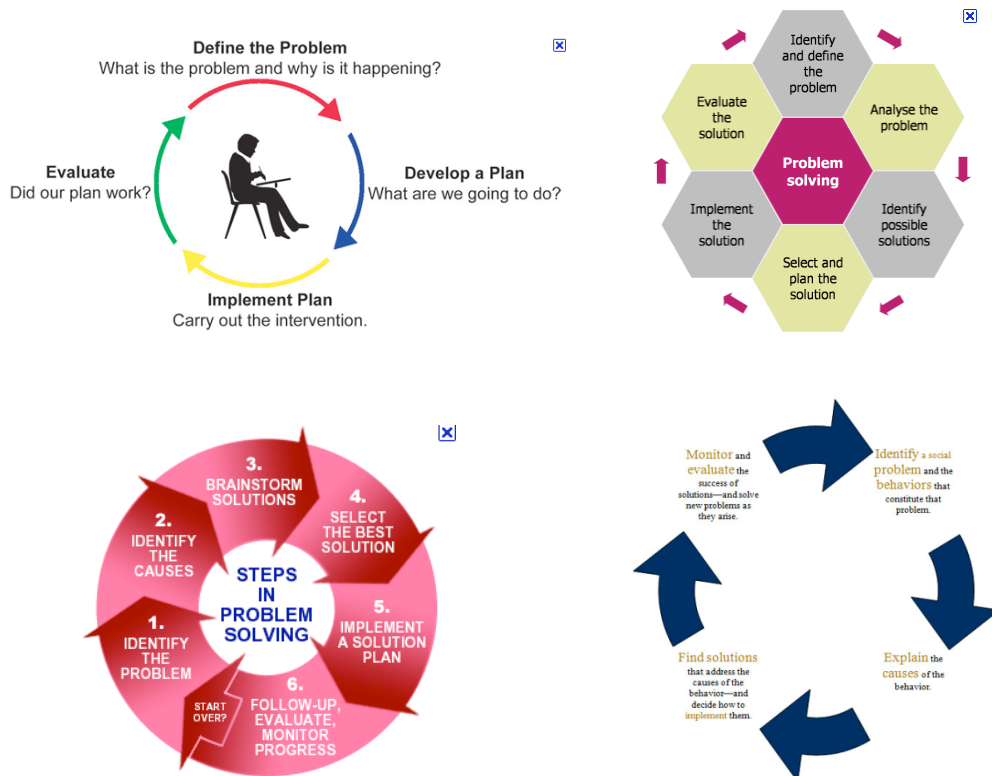
CHAPTER 8

THE DELIVERABLES OF CO-DESIGN

8.1 Problem solving processes

The most insightful way of demonstrating the deliverables that result from commissioning co-design is through a set of case studies from design agencies specialising in service design, transformation design and social design.

The design process, like many problem solving processes, consists (in layman's terms) of identifying and understanding a problem, generating potential solutions, testing solutions, implementing the most successful ones and evaluating the outcomes.



Figures 7 – 10. A range of problem solving processes from different professions ranging from engineering to law, but all demonstrate a similar procedure (clockwise: Fig 7 - University of Florida. “Student Support Service Project”, Fig 8 - Raimund Barwe Engineering. “Home Page”, Fig 9 - NYS and CSEA Partnership. “Home Page”, Fig 10 - International Consortium for Law and Development. “ICLAD’s Problem- Solving Theory & Methodology”).

For DOTT Cornwall, the Design Council developed their own version of the problem solving process based on using a collaborative approach throughout: diagnose, co-discovery; co-

design; co-develop; co-deliver and legacy. Although co-design has its own phase within this model, the entire problem solving process is referred to as a co-design process.

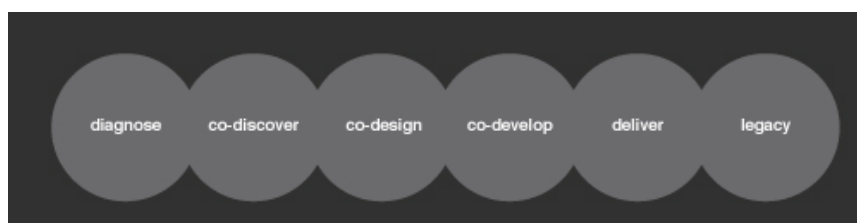


Figure 11. DOTT methodology (Design Council “Design Methods”).

Often the briefs set by the client focus on one or two specific stages of the problem solving process. For example, a brief in the previous chapter asked for an agency to gather insight into, and devise a strategy for, addressing teenage pregnancy. At the time of commission, the client did not require the strategy to be developed, implemented and evaluated. Commissioning separate stages reduces financial commitment, minimising the risk of working with a design agency and the uncertainty of what will be discovered and designed, within a bureaucratic and ridged public sector structure that makes it difficult to innovate.

Due to this compartmentalised commissioning structure, deliverables therefore occur at each stage. DOTT Cornwall’s visualisation of the process will be used to show the different deliverables at each stage of the co-design process through a set of case studies. These are sub-categorised under the three areas for which co-design is commissioned: engagement, service reform and health improvement.

8.2 Phase: Co-discover. Deliverable: Insight

The first stage of DOTT’s process is ‘diagnose’, which is essentially an ‘administration’ phase to set the project up (e.g. locating existing work to learn from, identifying a core project team, refining the brief). It has no deliverables, and therefore the co-discover stage is the first to be reviewed.

The deliverable of the ‘co-discover’ stage is insight into the needs, motivations and barriers of people in relation to a specific social issue. For projects commissioned in the area of service reform or health improvement, the client requires initial insight into the needs of the service users or target audiences in order to understand the service or behavioural based problem more fully. As for engagement projects, a better understanding of the communities the commissioner serves, and the most effective ways to engage them is often the driver behind the ‘co-discover’ phase.

8.2.1 Insight gathering techniques

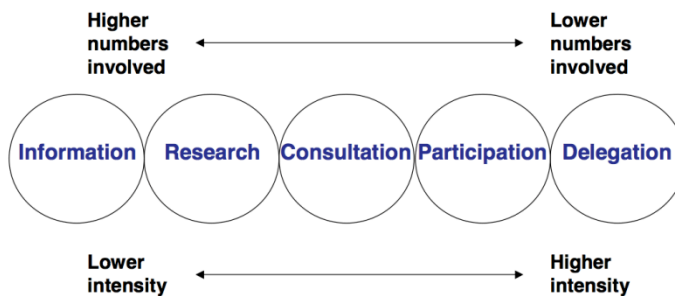


Figure 12. *The Engagement Spectrum, after Arnstein (Great Britain 2003b).*

With reference to New Labour's 'Engagement Spectrum', the co-discovery stage falls under 'research' and 'consultation', and can be described as 'user-centric'. The majority of the public sector practiced a user-centric approach to engagement under New Labour - residents' committees, focus groups and door-to-door surveys (Budge, Mckay and Newton 2007) - which was also reflected in co-design and the user-centred methods initially used.

User-centred co-discovery methods include:

- **Contextual interviews** – spending time with a person in their own domain to gather a deep and rich understanding of their actual (not reported) behaviour, needs, motivations.
- **Focus groups** – group discussions to gather insight from numerous people.
- **Audience segmentation** - a process of grouping people with similarities, by defined criterion such as demographics, psychographics or their communication behaviours.
- **Customer journey mapping** – a method of visually representing the actual experience of a service user. Journey mapping provides in-depth understanding of services, the gaps and problem areas, and identifies opportunities for improvement and innovation.
- **Behaviour journey mapping** – developed by Uscreates, a tool that plots behaviours to identify barriers and opportunities to change.

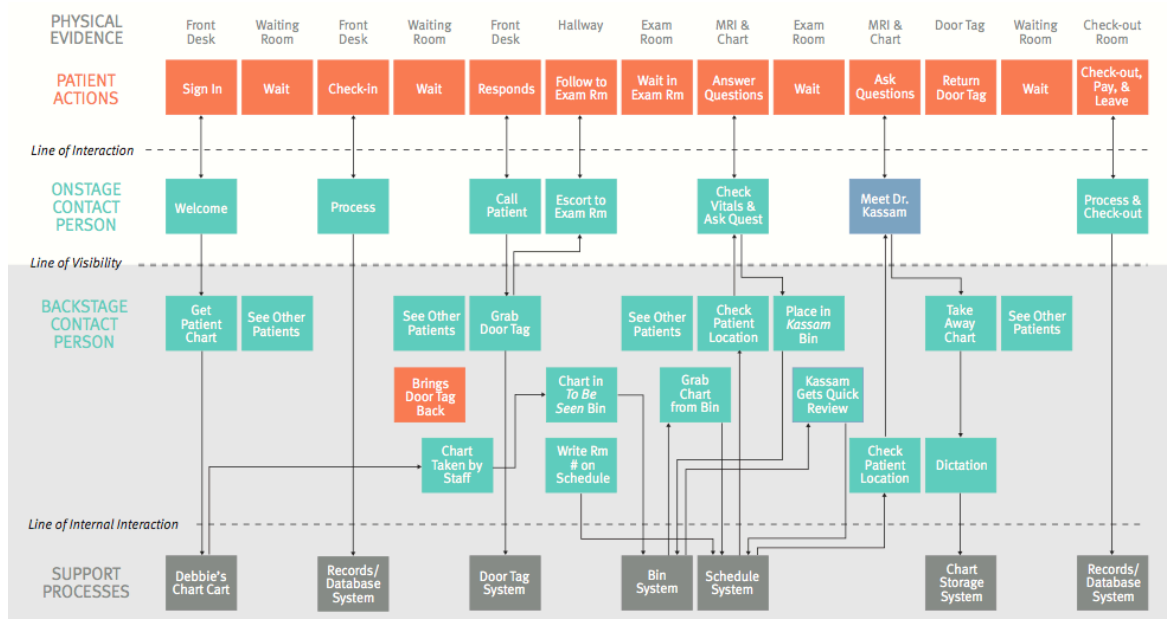


Figure 13. Example of service journey mapping (Service design tools. "Tool Blueprint").

To increase the level of collaboration, techniques that focused on increasing engagement and empowerment amongst stakeholders have been developed. These more participatory approaches to gather insight include:

- **Video diaries** – using film as a method to capture stakeholders' actions and thoughts.
- **Insight toolkits/cultural probes** (Gaver, Dunne and Pacenti 1999) – techniques that identify the true behaviours of people, such as participant journals (writing or photography based) and questionnaires to be answered through photography, or voice recordings.

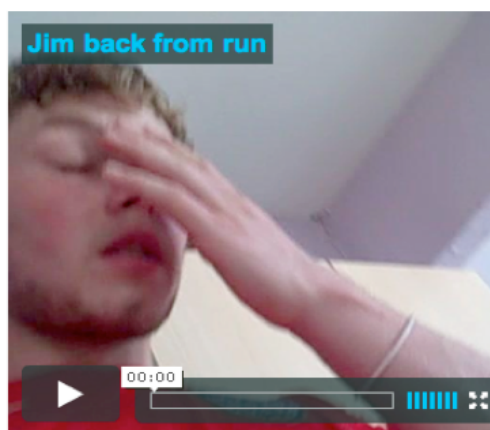


Figure 14. Video Diaries (Uscreates image, 2009).

Video cameras were provided to 6 young people who were asked to record a typical day in their life, to provide the backdrop to a project attempting to reduce teenage pregnancy rates. A set of questions were provided by the designers to guide the participants. This was the only intervention from the designer, who otherwise allowed the young person a high level of control over the insight-gathering process.



Figure 15. *Insight Toolkit (Uscreates image 2009).*

A package of tools to ‘provoke inspirational responses’ (Gaver et al. 1999) were given to residents in deprived neighbourhoods of London to gather insight into their living environments. Questions were provided as were a camera, dictaphone and postcards to record the responses.

These participatory approaches have allowed participants greater involvement, however essentially, the designer is still in charge of directing the work, identifying the people they want to work with and supplying the questions. However, in the final years of New Labour, the methods to gather insight gave even more responsibility and power to the users. For example, Uscreates started using 'peer research' techniques (D. Burns 2007).

Peer research trains members of a community (drawn from hard-to-reach social groups) to become peer researchers and carry out in-depth conversational interviews with individuals from within their own social networks. Peer research places members of the target audience at the heart of the research process, setting the research agenda, conducting the discussions and analysing the information.

Peer research instils ownership of the process in the target audience, but also provides access to insights that a designer would not uncover. The subjects become the actors, determining the questions posed to them and the collection of data, with the designer in a supporting role. As Burns says, “peer research can be seen as a form of distributed leadership” (Burns 2007:149).

Case study: Peer research for breast screening uptake and cervical screening coverage in Portsmouth

Commissioning category: Health Improvement

Date: 2010

A collaborative methodology was implemented in NHS Portsmouth to carry out a scoping study to increase breast screening uptake and cervical screening coverage in Portsmouth City. The methodology delivered by Uscreates consisted of 5 phases: A literature review, face-to-face consultation, peer-to-peer training and interviews, co-design workshop, and reporting and presentation.

Members of the target audience were invited to take part in two days of training which involved building their knowledge of cervical and breast screening and the available services locally; research skills training in participatory research; conversational interviewing; good and bad questions; body language; ethics and research conduct to ensure that the research is conducted in accordance with *Market Research Society Guidelines*; and the development of a semi-structured conversation and interview guide. Peer researchers led the design of this guide in order to ensure that it was constructed around language and ideas that they understood and felt comfortable using.

Over a three-week period, the peer researchers conducted between five and eight informal conversational interviews with members of their friendship and social networks. Key findings were jotted down on note taking templates during or after each interview to ensure that all aspects were remembered and recalled. After the first two interviews, and then once the interviews were completed, the peer researchers reported back to a member of the design team to provide detailed feedback of the contents of the interview.

There were three key advantages of this feedback system: the designers were able to monitor the research and the key findings coming out of the primary research; the designers were able to probe discussion points, helping the peer researcher to remember the details of everything that was covered in the interview, and peer researchers were able to raise any challenges that had occurred to ensure their research confidence remained high for the duration of the interview period. Once all interviews were finished, the peer researchers were invited to take part in a half-day analysis workshop. The aim was to ensure that they led the analysis process, and offered their own interpretations of the findings.

There were three key benefits of this approach:

- by tapping into established relationships of trust, the participatory approach quickly generated rich narratives about people's lives, providing a depth of insight into how people view their world, conceptualise their behaviour and experiences, and make

decisions about their lives;

- the close partnerships developed between the designers and the peer researchers offered the potential to build effective design solutions for health practitioners and policy makers to work with and within the community;
- trained Peer Researchers became a valuable resource for further scoping work carried out by the Primary Care Trust and therefore provided good value for money.



Figure 16. Peer research training (Uscreates image 2010).

As can be seen from the examples from this section, insight is collected through numerous forms and once collated, becomes a deliverable to the client. How does this insight differ from what a research organisation would provide the client? The collaborative insight gathering techniques that designers have developed provide a deeper perspective than what would be gathered through interviews and surveys. The methods also engage the ‘hard to reach’, providing more inclusive data to inform the next steps of the project.

Designers have excelled at encouraging involvement or ‘recruiting’ people to participate in the co-discovery stage, and this distinguishes them from social researchers and ethnographers using similar techniques. Designers create methods to build relationships, and can design effective communications and enticing environments to attract people’s interest. Often the ‘recruitment’ method and the insight gathering method are designed as one. For example, Uscreates’ RANT BOX, a portable, pop-up ‘diary room’, that is equipped with inflatable chairs and a video camera to record discussions, is an engaging environment and recruitment tool that attracted young people to provide information about their sexual health and well-being. In addition a facilitator was present to led consultations on the subject. It proved to be a great success and according to Zoe Stanton, one of the directors at Uscreates this was “due to the

popularity of reality TV genres, the participants fully understood and embraced their role and told us what they thought” (Stanton 2010).

The Rant Box proved to be a useful tool to recruit and interview young people, and Uscreates’ directors believe this would not have happened if more traditional methods had been used, such as posters and flyers. The unique style of the Rant Box provided an exciting way of being consulted and set the tone for the direction of the project.

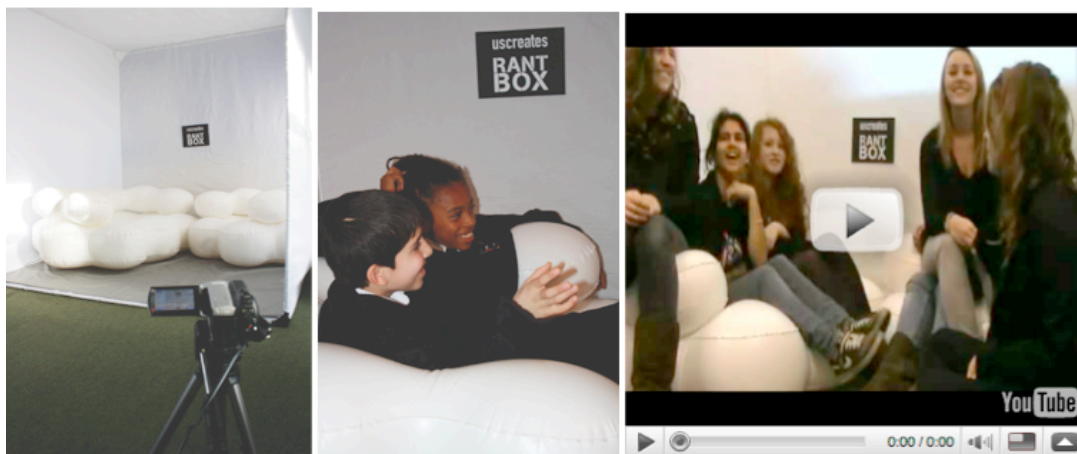


Figure 17. RANT BOX (Uscreates image 2009).

Case study: Generating actionable insight into the health and wellbeing of migrant workers

Commissioning category: Public engagement

Date: 2009

NHS Mid-Essex commissioned a project on the migrant worker communities from the A8³³ countries working in Mid-Essex, with the aim of identifying what would encourage migrant workers to increase their use of primary care services and health improvement services.

NHS Mid-Essex has high levels of migrant workers who were not accessing or using local health services appropriately. This is impacting the health of individuals from these communities and adding to the strain on local health resources. Furthermore, there was limited information on the health and lifestyle behaviours of this group due to cultural and language barriers and difficulties in locating and accessing communities.

Therefore, the overall aim of the project was to gather actionable insight from which interventions and services could be designed and tested to encourage migrant workers to increase access of primary care services and health improvement services.

³³ A8 or Accession 8 = the countries which joined the European Union (EU) on 1 May 2004. Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Primary and secondary research was used to gain insight into the health and well-being of migrant workers' communities. The primary research methods were designed to be appealing, engaging and fun for all involved. Most importantly the primary research had to be in a format that would appeal to and engage the target audience.

Recruitment method

A touring caravan visited twelve workplaces and social clubs within the Mid-Essex area, setting up a 'pop up' café at each site. Tea/coffee, biscuits and fruit were offered in exchange for participant's time.

The *Touring Café Caravan* was inspired by *The World Café model* (Brown and Isaacs 2005). As a conversational process, The World Café was created as a simple methodology to host conversations about important questions. These conversations can evoke the collective intelligence of the participating members in the conversation and discover new insight.



Figure 18. *Touring Caravan Café* (Uscreates image 2009).

Through the *Touring Caravan Café*, 137 migrant workers participated. To ensure a representative demographic, Uscreates and NHS Mid Essex devised a 'wish list' sample. It was based on the Migrant Registration Set 2008, a document outlining the data surrounding the number and origin of migrant workers. The majority of the migrant workers spoken to said that they would not have attended a formal version of consultation (e.g. focus group), which

increased our confidence that some of the 'hardest to reach' migrants had been consulted.

User-centered methods for gathering insight

Semi-structured interviews covered demographics, lifestyles, experiences and perceptions of NHS primary care services and the migrant workers were encouraged to talk about anything else that they felt had an impact on their health and wellbeing and specifically access to Primary Care services.

A range of resources that migrant workers could engage with during their conversations to express themselves in more creative and less verbal methods were also on hand. The resources took the form of large interactive panels dispersed around the pop-up café (see Figure 19). The following are some examples:

- **Did you Know:** This panel asked migrant workers whether they know about some key facts related to healthcare services, sick leave, and translation services. Participants were given stickers to place on 'yes' or 'no' for each 'Did you Know' fact, and this helped quantify the insight gathered.
- **Geographical Mapping of Services:** A mapping exercise asked participants to write about services they were aware of on post-it notes and stick them on the Mid-Essex map. The resource was a useful knowledge sharing tool between the migrant workers and Uscreates.
- **Thoughts and Ideas:** This panel invited participants' input on suggestions to improve health services and health information in their areas.



Figure 19. Interactive panels for the Touring Caravan Café (Uscreates image 2009).

In-depth interviews were carried out with eight migrant workers, who had in-depth accounts of the NHS services they had used. Their stories were mapped as a customer service and behaviour journey. For example, one story outlined the confusion about where and when to be treated for different conditions. This scenario was regularly encountered throughout the work

3.3 Triggers to accessing A&E

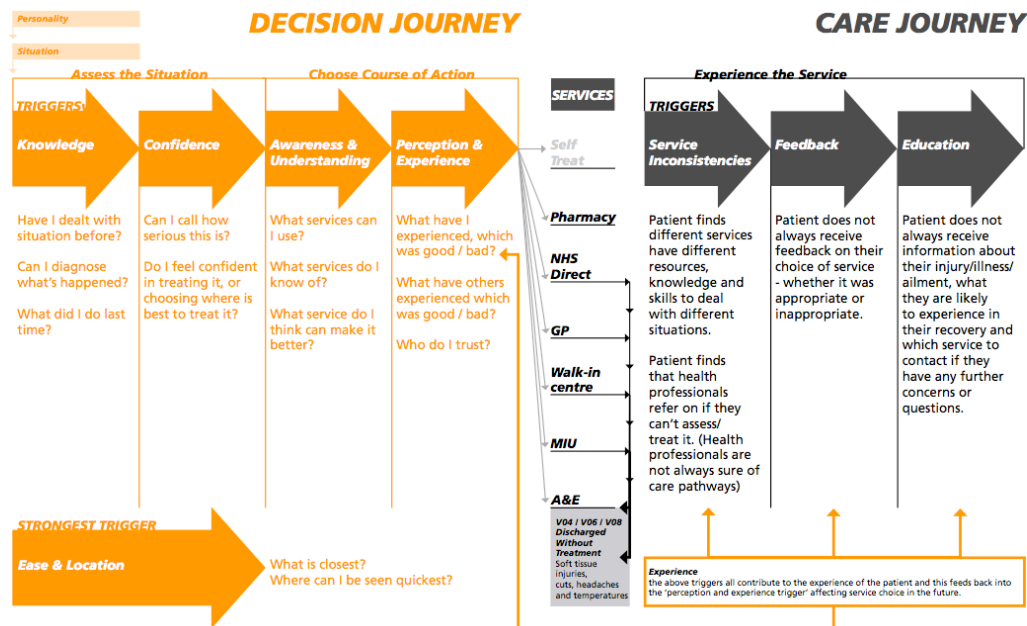


Figure 20. Behavioural journey map (Uscreates image 2009).

The service and behavioural journey maps highlighted nine key barriers to more informed and appropriate accessing of NHS services:

- Location of services
- Lack of knowledge of the services available
- Lack of confidence to chose the right service for their condition
- Lack of awareness and understanding
- Previous experiences of services (leading to positive of negative perceptions)
- Language barriers
- Fear of taking time off work
- Self-sufficiency
- Expense (in relation to dentists)

The maps were also used to create four profiles of typical migrant workers who were encountered, such as the 'over anxious' mother who regularly used health services, but not always appropriately and therefore had a negative perception of the NHS.

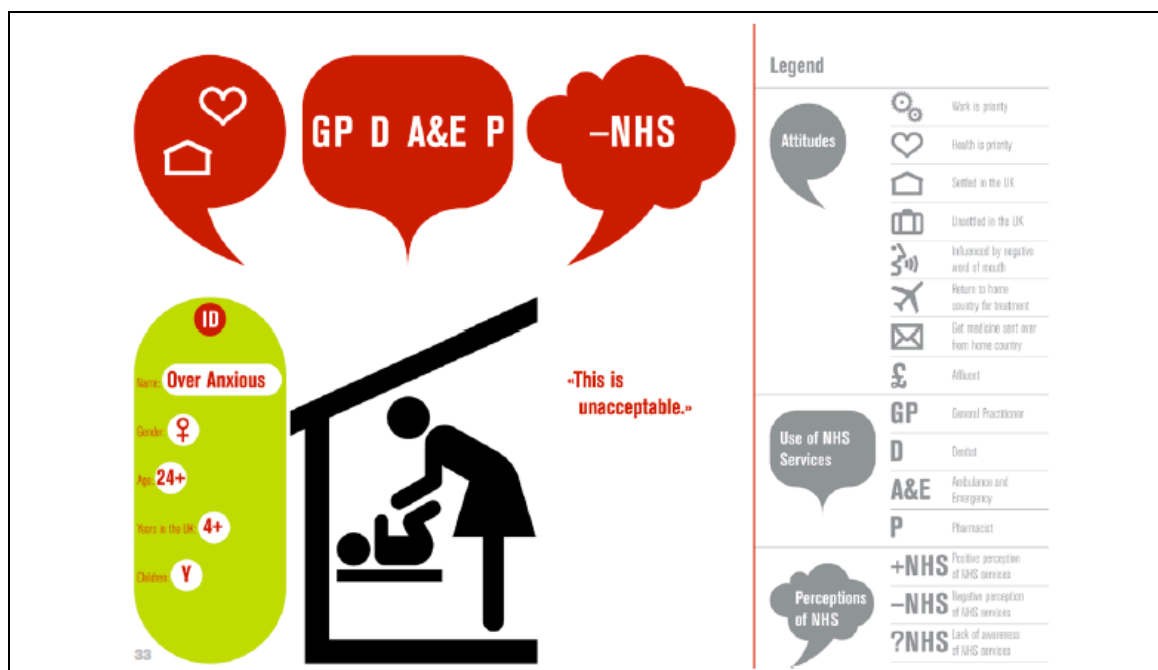


Figure 21. Visual profile of one of groups of migrant workers encountered (Uscreates image 2009).

Insight

Uscreates extracted the following insight from the conversations at the Touring Cafés:

- Mid-Essex migrant workers are a highly complex and diverse group of individuals but a common pragmatic need for stability and security motivates them to move to the UK.
- Awareness of NHS Mid-Essex services varies considerably but can be very poor. Key sources of awareness are word of mouth, the Internet and GPs (in this order).
- Very few migrants are using the comprehensive range of services available to them.
- Many migrants have sub-conscious benchmark expectations of the NHS from their own healthcare systems. In their A8 countries of origin they generally have immediate access to health specialists, as well as antibiotics over the counter.
- Key barriers prevent the greater accessing of NHS services such as lack of awareness and understanding, basic inherent language barriers and advanced emotive language barriers, lack of trust in NHS services, perception that health is not a UK priority, fear of taking time off work, self-sufficiency, and financial barriers in relation to accessing dentists.

The commissioning officer at NHS Mid-Essex was happy with the results and said:

The professional and innovative approach was refreshing. The final product [the insight] was excellent, and has enabled us to understand the needs of migrant workers, and has assisted us in commissioning services differently (Uscreates 2011).

8.3 Phase: Co-design Deliverable: Recommendations

The combination of expertise from the communities (being the expert in themselves), service users (experts in their experiences of using services), front line staff (experts in delivering the service), service commissioners and providers (experts in feasibility and logistics), with that of the designer, produces innovative ideas to address social challenges. These ideas form the recommendations that are provided to the commissioning organisation, the deliverable of the co-design phase.

8.3.1 Co-design events

The following case study demonstrates how a co-design events or workshops produce recommendations that are delivered to the client. Co-design events have become a fundamental tool/activity in generating solutions to social challenges.

Case study: Co-design event structure, for increasing 'smoking quit rates' with female routine and manual workers

Commissioning category: Health Improvement

Date: 2009

In 2009 a co-design event was delivered on a project to increase 'smoking quit rates' with female routine and manual workers (RMWs) over the age of 40. The focus of the co-design workshop was to produce recommendations for better communication of health messages and services to RMWs. Following the project's equivalent of the 'co-discover' phase, the next step was to understand how RMWs would respond to different communication channels and what their preferences for different types of media were. Rather than using target group index data, which identifies potential strategies for communicating health messages, a co-design event was held to ask project stakeholders to generate the ideas instead.

Introduction and introductions

Guests, including RMWs, smoking cessation experts, designers and social marketers, were welcomed and introduced. Refreshments were available and interesting topical materials were on display, such as newspaper clippings, photographs and quotes from the insight gathered. The materials helped to engage and focus the participants on the topic area for the day.

Setting the scene

A presentation of the project's aims and objectives and outline of the day was given. The insight gathered from the 'co-discover' phase was also presented to verify finding, and ensure that all participants held the same level of knowledge, from which they could draw on

throughout the activities.



Figure 22. Co-design presentation of the project's aims and objectives (Uscreates image 2009).

Mass idea generation exercise on how to increase smoking quit rates

A method called Speed Modelling (which Uscreates devised) generated multiple ideas that could be drawn on throughout the session. Speed Modelling is a 3D form of 'brainstorming'. The facilitators led a discussion and asked specific questions to encourage ideas on increasing smoking quit rates, which participants then modelled. Whereas more traditional discussion and brainstorming exercises can result in a few people dominating the group, speed modeling helped everyone contribute on a level playing field. Barriers to contributing ideas were broken down, and a creative and exciting tone was set for the day.



Figure 23. Speed Modelling (Uscreates image 2009).

Feedback and Group prioritisation exercise of findings

An exercise to prioritise the ideas generated by Speed Modelling was facilitated. The ideas were reviewed in light of a number of factors: innovation, resources, finance, longevity and scalability. The factors took into account the need for innovation, but also feasibility of developing and implementing them.

Group work on project briefs

Small, mixed teams of participants worked on briefs set by Uscreates to create methods of improving existing smoking cessation services and communications. These briefs had been developed as a result of the insight gathered in the 'co-discover' phase. The mixture of participants' expertise helped in devising solutions that were user-centred and innovative, but also feasible to develop within the service profession available.



Figure 24. Participants collaboratively working on briefs (Uscreates image 2009).

Group voting and prioritisation

The teams presented their ideas back to the group, who decided which ones should be developed, prototyped and tested. There was an opportunity for open discussion, which resulted in development of ideas from a broader perspective.

Round up and action points

A plan of action to develop the prioritised ideas was decided on. Participants were encouraged to take responsibility in moving the work forward, and therefore each made a pledge in carrying out a task of the action plan.

In addition to idea generation, co-design events are a springboard to the next stage of the project, and form relationships and connections between stakeholders. For example, in the case study above, many of the people attending the workshop had not previously met each other, even though they did similar work. A voluntary organisation that existed to tackle smoking had not met the health promotion team from the Primary Care Trust or the Local Council. More surprisingly employees from the Primary Care Trust had not met, and sometimes were not even aware, of the work that the Local Council were doing, and vice versa. Very few of the civil servants had ever met the people around whom their work centered. As a result there emerged a more joined-up approach to increasing smoking cessation.

Even with extensive research, designers will never obtain the same level of knowledge that a specific group of people experiencing a social challenge naturally have, e.g. teenage girls and the reasons for teen pregnancy. Therefore it is important for designers to facilitate the target audience they are working with and the organisation who support them in generating design

solutions. It ensures feasibility and sustainability of the ideas. As Joe Heapy from Engine pointed out during a conference:

We support organisations in designing and innovating services and because services are complex, and they involve relationships between people, you can't design services without co-designing with people (Heapy 2009).

There are those within social design who do not believe that people who are not trained in design can come up with innovative recommendations to address the problems in question. This is always debated at conferences. At *InterSections 2007* conference, which brought together "leading thinkers in design to consider how design is evolving and how this is affecting its relationships with other fields" (Myerson 2008:1) James Woodhuysen³⁴, Professor of Forecasting and Innovation at De Montfort University, argued that "designers should stop their hand-wringing over social problems and the state of the environment, and start working on the real, hard technological solutions that are out there waiting to be fixed" (Myerson 2008:7). With social problems, however, technocratic answers are rarely a solution, which is why co-design emerged in the first place.

In another critique, Joseph Harrington, a freelance service designer, pointed out that the design community are starting to question whether co-design is actually delivering innovation (Harrington 2011), which seems to reinforce Woodhuysen's view. However, Harrington believes this question arises because the designers use tried and tested co-design techniques in the same ways - presenting the insight, facilitating exercises to open up creative thought, and an activity to apply the creative thinking to the challenge in hand. If there were a wider range of techniques, would there be a wider range of outcomes? Or is it that the same ideas always emerge because designers are always asked to address similar social problems? Both criticisms have elements of truth, but similar ideas indicate a consensus, and this can only be viewed as positive. Even though the co-designed ideas may not be considered innovative, as they have been suggested, and even implemented elsewhere, they can nevertheless to be new to a specific community.

8.3.2 The collaborative spectrum of co-design

As with the whole of the co-design process, the levels of the 'co' in this specific co-design stage range from user-centred design to, participatory design to delegated design. At the user-centred end of the spectrum, facilitated exercises based on user-insight results in initial ideas. Designers then develop these ideas independently to form the recommendations.

³⁴ Whom Myerson (2008) describes as having little time for the 'touchy-feely, fatalist, ask-the-audience, co-creation stuff that just drops us all in the mire'.

Case study: Recommendations for community centre in Cornwall as a result of user-centred co-design

Commissioning category: Public service reform

Date: 2009

In October 2009, CPR (Camborne Pool Redruth) Regeneration asked DOTT Cornwall to commission a design agency to bring the design and project planning of a new community centre back into the hands of the people who would use it, and to determine how it could benefit the residents of Pengegon. Pengegon is ranked the third most deprived ward in Cornwall and in the top 5% nationally (Sea Communications 2011). The community centre is to be situated on the Pengegon estate which has high levels of unemployment, child poverty, drug and alcohol abuse and low educational attainment (Design Council. "Designing Communities" 2011).

Sea Communications were commissioned and undertook a phase of co-discovery. Insight was originally gathered through over 200 sources by engaging the communities, service providers and staff from other community buildings in conversations about what was needed in the area, what was lacking, what was under-utilised, what the issues were and also what was not wanted. For example in the original brief, there was a desire for a children's centre, but the community rejected the idea as they did not want the building to be 'all encompassing' (Woolf 2011). The co-discovery phase established the need for, and potential scope of the community building and a list of services was compiled based on these needs and wants. This included sports clubs, childcare facilities and over-50s social groups.

Following the 'co-discover stage', Sea Communications worked with local residents and service providers to co-design their ideal community centre during a 'community design day'. The event was held on the same day as the Royal Cornwall show, and therefore named the Royal Pengegon show. A marquee was erected in a field that was proposed for the community centre, and the community and service providers involved in the co-discovery phase were invited to attend. There was also an understanding that people from the wider community would drop-in, as the site was on the main thoroughfare of Pengegon.

Rather than the co-design event being a two-hour structured workshop, it was a drop-in event that allowed people to choose the time and level of their involvement. Sea Communications believed it was important to be visible, creative and flexible, as it had been noted that during the co-discovery phase this was the best way to engage with the community. Sea Communications had successfully engaged with residents through the media of film, which they were excited by. They had travelled to the participating residents to ensure there was

minimal disruption to their daily lives and commitments. This worked far more successfully than an SMS messaging service that was trialled, were residents had to be pro-active in texting their thoughts about the community building.

Activities were provided for the adults and children, such as building a community centre with cake. This worked well as many of the young people had really good and creative ideas, more so than the adults, according to Robert Woolf, Director of Sea Communications. Also by attracting children, adults became engaged, who may not have otherwise.



Figure 25. *Designing the community centre (Sea Communications. "Designing Communities Story").*

Other activities consisted of brainstorming activities with the resident's association around the build and implementation, 'naming the building' and a site map that stated all the possibilities for the use of the community centre that people could 'tick' to show agreement with suggestions or add their own ones.

The suggestion and ideas fed into the recommendations that were developed by Sea Communications. "We didn't drive it too much with our own agenda and were very honest about what the community wanted and said, then again we spotted other agendas besides from the community centre which we did push forward further" (Woolf). However the outcomes of the co-design phase were specified by CPR, as they required what was essentially an initial business plan for the community centre, including budgets to build, maintain and run. Sea Communications did not expect the community to have the answers for this level of design. However the co-designed cake of the community centre was taken by the project architects and informed their ideas in terms of the size of the room, the requirements of the rooms and the need for flexibility such as moving walls. Architectural drawings were produced taking the community's thoughts on board, which were then provided to surveyors to work out the costs. Sea Communications worked alongside the architects to design the key services that would be part of the community centre and then contacted the service providers to gain interest in the ideas.

"The whole process informed us that the project didn't need to be a huge £5 million building, but just something simple was needed" (Woolf 2011).

The findings and recommendations from the co-design event were presented back to the resident's association before they were presented back to CPR, to ensure that the ideas were not misread or misunderstood. This also helped to achieve 'buy in' and ownership from the residents, which was important as Sea Communications "had used creative license on the ideas". Developing a new building is very specific, professional skill and therefore the collaborative element of co-design was difficult. However as Woolf pointed out, the communities were so motivated that it would be feasible to involve them at a later stage, in the building and implementation of the ideas. There could be an argument to be made that training workless men in the area to be able to build the community centre would be more beneficial than bringing in labourers who are not local. The idea was suggested to the community, who were receptive, although the council were not.

The recommendations and the next stage of development are currently being discussed by the council, CPR and a housing provider company, who will build the centre.

In the middle of the spectrum is a more equal relationship between the designer and the project stakeholders. This consists of a genuine collaboration, where ideas are developed into recommendations together over a number of workshops.

Case study: Recommendations for a set of engagement tools for Camden Council as a result of participatory co-design

Commissioning category: Public engagement and public service reform

Date: 2009/2010

In 2009/2010, Camden Council in London, was granted Beacon Status, a recognition of excellence and innovation regarding learning and skills in the public sector, for their work in engaging older people.

Camden Council, commissioned Engine to devise and facilitate a series of workshops that would allow them to share their expertise in engagement with other Local Authorities, Government officers and the community and voluntary sectors and to collaboratively build a set of tools to support this transfer of knowledge at the time, and in the future.

Three workshops were held with the 'Beacon Learning Network', over twenty Local Authorities and their partners, and focused on how to transfer knowledge through face-to-face methods, as the council had identified this as a preferred approach. The sessions were structured around participants' reflection on engagement practices and experiences, the identification of gaps in

their knowledge and a shared understanding of the areas for improving engagement work. Co-design activities were facilitated by Engine to develop a number of tools to address specific engagement priorities.

The first workshop, 'Identify' aimed to "reflect on practices and experiences, to reveal gaps in knowledge and identify shared learning priorities" (Engine 2010). Engine designed and facilitated exercises to support this task: mapping existing engagement capabilities within different teams, sharing and comparing each others' capabilities to identify gaps in practice, and identifying and presenting an area of practice they would like to develop further. These areas of interest included: reaching a wider group of older people, and those classed as 'hard-to-reach' and understanding how best to engage older people with online.



Figure 26. Mapping existing engagement capabilities (Engine. "Local Authorities and Partners Designing Strategies for the Engagement of Older People").

The second workshop 'Make' generated ideas for useful tools that would help the participants investigate and understand key issues within their chosen priority areas. Engine provided a set of templates for participants to design tools that would aid exploration into the priority areas. The templates included journey maps, personas and segmentation models (as described on page 129). The participants were encouraged to use the templates to create their own tools. According to Harrington, one of the designers on the project, the participants took control of the ideas and the designers supported them in doing so. At the end of that workshop each team had a set of draft tools for their priority areas.



Figure 27. Populated tool templates for mapping customer involvement and participation (Engine. "Local Authorities and Partners Designing Strategies for the Engagement of Older People").

The third session 'Share and Plan' focused on how to take the draft tools and make them more 'useful and useable', by devising plans to ensure the tools would be used and disseminated in the right way. Each team of participants within the workshop had a designer facilitating and supporting them to develop and execute the tools. The designers also helped them to create 'road maps' visioning how they might disseminate the tools to their colleagues and on what projects it would be of use on.

Harrington acknowledged that the designers' presence was useful to help translate what the participants were saying into visual representations. Unlike other projects, Engine had refrained from carrying out too much synthesis and development of participants' ideas between workshops.

Synthesis is a tricky term as it means you have to put a lot of the designer's background knowledge into the process of analysis and drawing down through synthesis. In Camden we were very clear that we wanted participants to feel as if they were going through a process without any breaks. So their ideas didn't come back from the first workshop developed further and designed by someone else. We wanted them to have ownership over the work – there is always a worry that participants can lose the thread of the story of development otherwise (Harrington

2011).

Therefore it was important that the designers worked with the participants to do the synthesis and production during the final workshop. There were laptops around the room and the designers worked up the ideas for their tools graphically with the participants next to them. The tools, which included a process map to involve customers in the design and management of services, and a set of communication tools targeting older people, were printed out there and then, rather than this happening back at Engine's studio. Participants were then able to take away and use the designed tools within their organisations, which gave them a sense of ownership and responsibility.

To ensure the work remained at the forefront of the participants' minds in between the workshops, a blog was created by the council to document the development of the work and to provide information for those who had missed a session. The blog became an additional platform for feedback, reviews and sharing of ideas and information.

In addition to the tools, another co-designed outcome of the workshop was the publication of a 'step-by-step' guide to the facilitation of the workshop process that details how to tackle engagement challenges together and identify potential opportunities for development.



Figure 28. Prioritisation exercise (Engine. "Local Authorities and Partners Designing Strategies

for the Engagement of Older People").

Engine believe that the project had extremely positive outcomes, especially in demonstrating the power of sharing experiences across Local Authorities, rather than carrying out individual, isolated research (Engine 2010).

At the other end of the 'involvement' spectrum, the co-design work is led mainly by the project stakeholders, with the designer in a supporting role. This is becoming more common under the Coalition, as co-design practice aligns with the Big Society agenda. Here there is far greater ownership of the work for the project stakeholders, but the ideas are less likely to be radical, but still innovative in that community.

8.4 Phase: Co-develop Deliverable: Prototypes

Prototypes are the deliverables that result from the co-develop stage of the co-design process. Designers are experts in prototyping products and services quickly and, most importantly for the public sector, cheaply. Designers are able to mock up posters, tools, services or temporarily alter an environment where another type of consultancy would commission out this work, resulting in higher costs for the client. Designers' ability to prototype is discussed in more depth in the following chapter.

As before there is a range of user involvement in creating prototypes. As the following case study demonstrates, there is little user involvement in developing the recommendations from the previous stage into prototypes. It demonstrates a relatively high level of user involvement in testing the prototypes and providing feedback, although not in producing the final outcomes.

Case study: Prototyping *Southwark circle*

Commissioning category: Public service reform

Date: 2007

In 2007 Participle began work on a project to design a new service that would improve the quality of life and well-being of older people in the London Borough of Southwark.

Initial interviews with older people uncovered a range of insights around service provision and capabilities with daily tasks that lead to Participle identifying a need for a skills transfer or brokering service between people in the community and the older generations.

Designers at Participle developed these skeleton ideas and visually produced them as 'paper prototypes' to test the concept. These consisted of storyboards detailing how the service would work and flyers and brochures to help people envision what the service could entail

and look like. The paper prototypes formed the first stage of an iterative prototyping journey.

The paper prototypes were used as a tool to gather feedback from a range of potential service stakeholders, such as the service users (the older people) and community helpers (people who would provide the skills and services needed) during interviews and workshops. Following the feedback, a second, live prototype was produced by Participle to test the practical offer. The idea had been developed as an organisation, *Southwark Circle*, that would support people in their daily living by taking care of household tasks and forging social connections.

The second prototype consisted of trialling a dedicated phone line that older people, or 'members' as Participle refer to them, could call with a task. Participle would then allocate the task to an individual from a group of neighbourhood helpers who had also been recruited.

A key part of this live prototype was recruiting people to take part, according to Emma Southgate, a designer on the project (Southgate 2011). It was essential that the people involved in testing the prototype were a true representation of those who would use the service in the future. A range of criteria, such as: daily needs, outlook on life, quality of life, housing provision, proximity of family and economic background, was used to recruit participants. This criteria was based on the insight that Participle had previously gathered at the start of the project during the co-discovery stage.

Approximately 20 people were recruited and consisted of those who had been involved throughout the work and others who were new to the project. This was important as it allowed Participle to 'sense check' the concept and gain new ideas and contributions to the development of the service. In addition a number of people were recruited to fill the neighbourhood helper role.

The recruited members were provided with a pack that consisted of the service telephone number to call, a sheet of ideas and nudges to demonstrate the types of activities and chores that they may require assistance for and profile cards of the neighbourhood helpers who would aid them with the tasks. These profile cards had resulted through conversations during the paper prototyping stage and were important for the members to feel secure in opening their door to new people.

Over the six week pilot, the Participle office doubled as the call centre. Throughout the period there were constant adjustments to the service, which resulted from on-going interviews with members and neighbourhood helpers to gather feedback. The designers and the neighbourhood helpers worked together to devise solutions to any issues arising. For example tokens were introduced to members for them to 'spend', as some felt that they

should save their requests for help until they truly needed it, resulting in them not calling at all. Also stories of how members were using the service were shared with others to demonstrate the breadth of skills and help that could be requested.

At the end of the trial period, members and helpers were interviewed once again to gather their thoughts and feedback. A workshop was also held to collaboratively design the service communication materials, such as the branding, how it could be sold to future members and how to recruit people to the service.

Participle worked on the business model for the service alongside making the service improvements. A fully operational version of *Southwark Circle* was launched, based on a member subscription model, however as Southgate pointed out, it was and still is, in many respects a prototype. Participle are constantly assessing what works and what needs to be improved, and making adjusting it. For example the subscription model has been changed to pay-as-you-go, following feedback from the users.

The circle model is now being trialled in three new locations across the UK and, although they are being based on the Southwark model, the services are still being prototyped to make them location specific.

As seen from the case study above, during the co-develop stage of the design process, the public's involvement is user-centric, rather than user-led or collaborative, i.e. they become the subject instead of a partner in the process. Rather than involving participants in the development of the prototype, designers run trials of the prototypes with them, observing their use and gathering feedback.

Developing an idea into a functional product, service or system requires the specific expertise of a trained designer, and this expertise is one of the reasons why designers have been particularly successful in collaborative approaches to generating solutions for social sustainability. Although in theory the engagement methods and tools discussed so far could be used by any professional, or could be given to the public sector to use, there is little evidence to suggest that any of these parties are able to take the insight gathered and transfer it to be of use in creating a solution.

8.5 Phase: Co-deliver Deliverable: Implemented designs

The deliverable of the co-deliver stage is the implemented design. If the commission is in the area of service reform, the design is an improvement to an existing service, or a new service. If the commission is in the area of health improvement, campaigns, events or programmes are often the outcomes, and for engagement work, an engaged group of the public. For example,

Participle implemented the *Southwark Circle* service, Uscreates implemented a cancer awareness health improvement programme in Portsmouth and Thinkpublic implemented a *Community Coaches* programme that trained community volunteers to engage and work with families with complex needs (Britton 2011).

Case study: Delivery of a cancer awareness programme in Brighton and Hove

Commissioning category: Health improvement

Date: 2009/2010

In December 2007, the Department of Health launched the Cancer Reform Strategy, which outlined actions to improve cancer services across the NHS. A key strand of this work highlighted the importance of raising awareness in the general population.

Uscreates were commissioned to improve public awareness of cancer (risk factors, signs and symptoms) and the importance of early diagnosis, promote earlier reporting to GPs, and encourage prompt referral. The goal was to achieve earlier diagnosis and treatment, and in the longer term a reduction in cancer mortality rates.

To increase understanding of the triggers specific to the early presentation of lung cancer, and test the barriers identified in a literature review, seven focus groups were held. In addition, three of the focus group participants were recruited to carry out further peer research amongst their friends using a discussion guide and a simple to use digital video camera to record responses.

Interviews were also conducted with ten stakeholders including GPs, a workplace health coordinator, smoking cessation services, topic experts, local community organisation representatives and representatives from secondary care.

The findings from the 'co-discover' phase were presented at a co-design event that brought together a range of stakeholders including members of a PCT cancer awareness steering group, topic specialists, and representatives of the target audience. Facilitated activities included idea generation exercises and prioritisation debates to support the participants in developing methods to promote early detection of lung cancer in response to the scoping findings.

The outputs from the co-design event were reviewed and mapped against the behavioural goals. The ideas were worked up by Uscreates into an overarching strategy proposition. The strategy was designed to achieve the key behavioural goals: to increase the proportion of people with lung cancer presenting early; and to increase the number of lung cancer referrals made by GPs via the two week wait route. The strategy addressed the key steps in the

behavioural journey to early presentation and diagnosis. These steps are:

- Awareness – the target audience need to be aware of the symptom of a three-week cough and the need to get this cough checked.
- Acknowledgement – if aware of the three-week cough symptom, the target audience next need to acknowledge that they, or a loved one, have this symptom rather than dismissing or ignoring it.
- Acting – if someone is both aware of and has acknowledged their symptom, the target audience next needs to and get a persistent cough checked out. In addition, if someone visits their GP with a persistent cough lasting for more than three weeks, it is imperative that the GP acts and refers the patient for further investigation under the two week wait referral guidelines.

Relevant activities and interventions from the strategy were prototyped and pre-tested with members of the target audience at two focus group sessions and the strategy was presented to key stakeholders for feedback and development. The most successful and well received ideas were then collaboratively implemented (or 'co-delivered').

A team of 16 volunteers were recruited to raise awareness of the three-week cough message amongst both the general public and their networks, and became known as the 'Community Health Squad'. The role of the volunteers is to help achieve step two of the journey to early presentation outlined in the strategy - Awareness.

The volunteers were recruited through a number of avenues including listing the volunteering opportunity with local and national volunteering hubs, attending existing volunteer recruitment events, and advertising the opportunity through local businesses and job centres.

Volunteers attended an introductory briefing session where they met each other and the NHS team, received basic behavior change and awareness raising training, participated in role play exercises to try out their role as volunteers and also gave feedback on how the volunteer team could work. Two volunteers opted to attend an additional two-day behavior change training course to add to their skill base.

Community Health Squad branding was developed for the volunteer team to give them a visual identity and name to support them in their work. The brand identity does not directly link to lung cancer to provide flexibility to link in with other cancer agendas or wider health promotion programmes in the future.

Volunteers received a toolkit to support them in their role to raise awareness of the three-week cough message and the call to action to get it checked. The toolkit included: A5 flyers; postcard flyers; a sash; car/window stickers; an interaction tally card for evaluation purposes; FAQs;

What If... scenario guidance; and a pharmacy map.

The Community Health Squad's campaign was launched at Brighton's football stadium. The team of volunteers and partners were equipped with a toolkit to support them in their role to raise awareness of the three-week cough message and the call to action to get it checked. Cheerleaders and football players also played their part in communicating the message.

The campaign was also supported by pharmacists supplied with 'Your Check Up' Passports, that they could offer to patients visiting them with lung cancer symptoms. Equipped with the passports, patients would find it easier to book an appointment with their doctors, as it detailed the reasons for visiting and the information they should provide during their consultation.

NHS Brighton and Hove have commissioned the community arm of *Brighton and Hove Albion Football* club to continue to deliver the work. The volunteers will be managed and supported by this project in the future. A number of briefing presentations have also been delivered by NHS Brighton and Hove, and Uscreates, to engage and link Primary Care, and other related stakeholders, into the programme. This has involved presentations to three Practice Based Commissioning locality groups, a briefing presentation and consultation at the Practice Nurse forum, and presentations to the Sussex Cancer Network lung cancer tumour group, and the PCT steering group. Training for GP receptionists and pharmacy counter assistants is currently being established.

Much learning was gained through the process of co-delivering interventions:

- Volunteers have a sense of ownership of the project if they have been collaborating in its development from the outset
- Volunteers are a valuable resource and should be treated as equal delivery partners of a programme.
- It can be time consuming finding people to co-deliver a project, and although many volunteer organisations exist, they may want to protect their volunteer networks.



Figure 29. The Community Health Squad's campaign materials (Uscreates image 2010).

In addition to the range of deliverables already mentioned, toolkits have often been produced with the aim to increase capabilities of civil servants (including NHS employees) in co-design. The toolkits aim to teach, guide and support the public sector to carry out co-design work without commissioning design agencies in the future. Essentially these toolkits turn the co-discover and co-design stages of the process into a product, allowing the commissioner to become the supplier.

Case study: Delivery of the co-design process through a toolkit

Commissioning category: Public engagement and public service reform

Date: 2007

The NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement is funded by the Department of Health and as a result are given 'challenges' by the organisation to address. In 2007 one of these challenges was to explore how to turn the rhetoric of involving patients in care into reality. The notion had been discussed for some time, but with little action.

The Institute was asked to support patients and families to work closely with health services and through doing so, improve the services. The common scenario was that most services had been designed on the assumptions of providers rather than insight into the patients' needs.

The Institute began the work by broadly exploring customer satisfaction and how it was achieved. By visiting and interviewing the people whose responsibility this was at companies such as Virgin, John Lewis and Tesco, the Institute became aware that they were employing service designers and service design agencies. Customer satisfaction was being outsourced to specialists, and it was producing successful results.

Commissioning service design agencies was a contentious issue when raised within the NHS, due to the lack of scientific backgrounds, and the misconception of designers being stylists. To compensate, two ethnographic researchers were employed alongside Thinkpublic, who were commissioned as the service design agency, to observe their approach and evaluate it.

The NHS Institute worked with Thinkpublic in Luton and Dunstable hospital to trial a co-design approach to service improvement. To ensure that the approach was tested in the most rigorous manner, the Institute asked the hospital to choose what they deemed to be their best department so improvement would be more difficult to make. If the co-design approach resulted in service improvements, then it would hold more weighting than if improvements were identified in a department where they were obvious. The Head and Neck cancer service was chosen and through a collaboratively working with staff and patients, 42 changes were made.

Alongside the work being carried out, a toolkit was being designed that documented the approaches. This was also being designed collaboratively, with patients working with the designers to generate content and documentation for it, such as consent forms.

The result was the *Experience Based Design* toolkit that aims to redesign the NHS from a service that “does things to and for its patients, to one where the service works with patients and supports them in their health needs” (Maher and Baxter 2009).

A prototyped toolkit was trialled in four other health services, including other hospitals, but also off-site clinics. Through prototyping, tweaks were made, for example with the language which was felt to be too hospital centric as a result of the initial co-design phase being carried out with Luton and Dunstable hospital.

The trials of the EBD toolkit took a more “light touch” approach (Maher 2009), with support being provided to the health services, but without the full time guidance of a design agency or the Institute. According to Maher, the main area in which they had to offer further support and guidance was during the co-discovery stage and teaching frontline workers who are naturally ‘pragmatic activists’ to observe situations rather than react to them. Following the trials, the EBD toolkit was modified before being tested one final time with South Central Strategic Health Authority with even less support from the Institute.

The EBD toolkit is now available for free for any health organisation in England. If the health organisation requires support in delivering the toolkit, they can buy it through the Institute. Ten workshops have also been held in which up to 100 people can attend and are guided through the toolkit and how to deliver it.

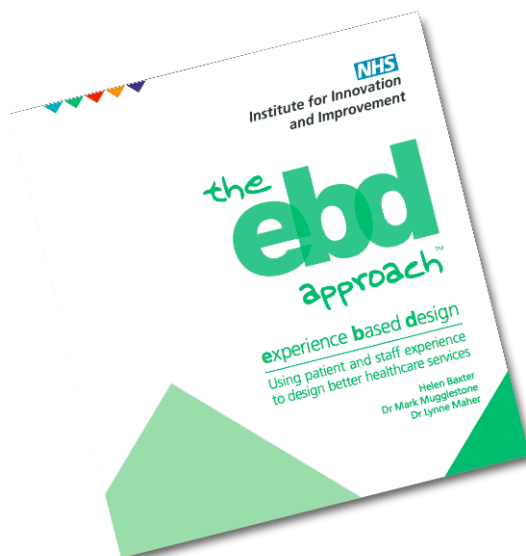


Figure 30. EBD toolkit (Institute for Innovation and Improvement. “Experience Based Design Approach Case Studies”).

The success of transferring co-design expertise is dependant on the civil servants using the toolkit and their willingness and vision for a new way of working. NESTA is currently engaged in this transfer experiment, through their co-production programme, which aims to increase understanding of co-production and how it can be applied to public services. NESTA are currently waiting to assess the results.

Transferring co-design expertise was discussed with Maher in regards to the EBD toolkits. Maher said that parts of the toolkit were more successfully adopted than others by NHS employees (Maher 2009). The observation, insight gathering and synthesis of information at the co-discovery stage is well executed, but the process often falters when it requires the bringing together of patients and staff to address the issues raised. Reasons cited for this have included the time commitment and organisation, and the patients and families not understanding the constraints of the NHS and therefore producing unfeasible ideas. Maher believes that although there are elements of truth to these claims, the overriding issue is confidence. The staff delivering the toolkit are not comfortable in facilitating activities and working closely with patients to generate ideas. Up until this point, the work is user-centred, with staff being in control of the observational work. The co-design stage requires true collaboration and participation, which means NHS staff having to relinquish some control and trust in the process, which is daunting without an external organisation to support this process.

Both case studies in this section demonstrate projects that draw on user involvement in the delivery of co-design projects. However under New Labour there were few examples of projects that reached implementation and even fewer that collaboratively delivered the outcomes with project stakeholders. This is emphasised with service design projects, as no examples of service user involvement in delivering service improvements or new services was found.

Under New Labour, there were conversations about personalised services opening up the possibility of users controlling the budgets for the services they used, but this co-delivery remained largely a conversation. However it is currently being considered again in relation to David Cameron's 'Big Society' (see chapter 10), in which empowerment and ownership have become the overriding concepts in the delivery of socially focused projects. Although increasing public involvement in their services is in line with a more democratic society, and was promoted and developed from the start of New Labour, it has been the recession that really instigated this approach.

8.6 Legacy

The legacy phase, according to DOTT Cornwall can include the visible outputs from a project, and usually takes the form of continued “thinking, ideas and practices” (DOTT Cornwall “Design Methods” 2011) that are used by project participants, and/or people who become champions for co-design and disseminate the related methods and tools within their organisations and communities.

By including ‘visible outputs’, the majority of projects have a legacy, as some form of communication material is usually produced. However it is more helpful to remove ‘visual outputs’ and focus on the other forms of legacy to identify successful examples of project legacy in the UK, such as:

- Thinkpublic’s Dementia Care project, in which they developed a Dementia Signposting Service, informed the National Dementia Care strategy.
- Participle’s *Southwark Circle* projects, which have resulted in two new ‘circles’ being developed in Suffolk and Hammersmith and Fulham, and nine other authorities considering them (Southgate 2011).
- Uscreates’ work to increase Breast Cancer awareness resulted in the client, NHS Gloucestershire, being invited to share the work with the *All Party Parliamentary Group on Breast Cancer*. This is a cross-party group of MPs, who meet regularly to discuss issues which may impact people affected by breast cancer.

In most problem solving processes, there would be an additional final stage called ‘evaluation’. The fact that the DOTT process, which has provided the framework for this chapter, only refers to ‘legacy’, and not the evaluation of it, is an indication in itself that it has been an area of particular weakness for co-design under New Labour. The deliverable of an evaluation should be a review on the social and cost benefits of co-design in addressing a social challenge, however under New Labour the emphasis was on the innovation and not the impact of the process and outcome. This started to change around the time of the recession when all public money had to be carefully accounted for, and continues under the Coalition today (see chapter 10).

Due to the lack of rigorous evaluation, many co-design projects have resulted in anecdotal evaluation that form case studies in literature such as Design Council (Design Council. “About Public Services by Design”) and NESTA publications (Mulgan 2007b), Design Week magazine (Billings 2011), the *Design Principle and Practice Journal* (Cook 2010c), and the *Australasian Medical Journal* (Szebecko and Tan 2009). The final publication reveals that there is growing international interest in the use of co-design for social sustainability.

There have been a few examples of financially evaluated projects. One these was carried out by Live|Work who were commissioned by One North East, the Regional Development Agency

for the North East of England. The brief was to deliver a project with Sunderland City Council to better understand how the long-term unemployed interacted with the city's employment services, in order to develop new ways to support this group back into work.

The outcome was *The Northern Way Worklessness Pilot – Make it Work*, which provided an integrated approach to the challenge of worklessness, bringing together a number of specialist community organisations covering mental health, drug rehabilitation and carers (Livework 2010). The aim of this coordinated approach was to ensure that individuals were mentally and physically healthy and socially stable before encouraging them into training and work.

The *Make it Work* service was piloted and at the time of writing (August 2010), the scheme has provided support to more than 800 people (Live|Work 2010), of which 200 found employment. According to Live|Work, David Freud, the government adviser on welfare, estimated that £62,000 can be spent on supporting the average person on incapacity benefit back into work, whereas the average costs of the *Northern Way Worklessness Pilot* is less than £5,000 per person (Live|Work 2010).

Although this is a positive example of evaluating financial return for the use of design, the project was not technically co-designed. There were elements of working with service users and ensuring the ideas generated were based on insight and user-centred. However the actual development of the *Make it Work* service was carried out by the design team.

Evaluating the benefits of co-design specifically (financial and social) has only recently occurred, as the case study in chapter 13 (Early detection of lung cancer: evaluating a co-design approach) demonstrates. It will be studies such as this that will continue to build the case for co-design, and will prove vital in its future development and adoption.

This chapter has demonstrated, using case studies and insight gathered during my own design practice, the deliverables that result from a co-design problem solving process. It is worth noting that although aiming to be objective in writing up the case studies, on reflection they may not be as critical as intended. I am in the position of being a designer within the 'co-design industry' and as a result the work is reviewed in a positive and somewhat subjective manner. Therefore the criticality of the case studies was not always present. This may also be reflected in the other case studies sourced through interviews and documentation by other designers who are also positive and subjective about their work, due to marketing and self-promotion reasons.

This chapter has also demonstrated how the co-design process can be used to address a range of social problems in an innovative and collaborative fashion, resulting in service changes that

are better tailored to the needs of users. However it has also highlighted a weakness in the evaluation of these interventions, but some evidence of their cost-effectiveness.

Throughout the chapter there has been reference to the spectrum of involvement in co-design and the ability of 'non-designers' in delivering a collaborative approach to tackle social sustainability issues. The following chapter explores the qualities that designers possess, over and above 'non-designers' and other professionals, to successfully lead on projects that require a participatory approach to addressing social challenges.

CHAPTER 9

THE DESIGN OF CO-DESIGN

9.1 Why are design agencies being commissioned?

As the previous chapter discussed, designers have been commissioned to work on a range of briefs from transforming or improving public sector services to engaging hard-to-reach citizens, and developing campaigns to improve health behaviours. However there are many organisations and industries that could answer these briefs and use participatory and human-centred approaches to do so, such as topic specific social enterprises and charities³⁵ and socially focused consultancies, so why is it that **design** agencies are being commissioned? For example the Institute for Insight in the Public Services (IIPS) is an organisation that provides “thought leadership” on service transformation in national and local government, and “supports innovation by identifying the techniques and processes necessary to engage with citizens and understand their needs and expectations” (IIPS). Michelle Harrison, the founding Chair of IIPS, when asked about the techniques and processes they use to engage citizens, responded:

We use customer journey mapping and deliberation, public engagement – a lot of face-to-face [interviews, focus groups], public juries and debating. There are a team of people whose work tends to mainly focus on this. Some of those people will be public sector specialists and some will be innovation specialists. The kind of researchers who tend to work on the projects we do, tend to be quite creative as well in the techniques they use. It’s not just their job to get people to open up, but also to find ways to make that information accessible (Harrison 2010).

Designers use all the techniques (except public juries) that Harrison mentions. What, then, are the qualities designers possess which continues to make their offer competitive against these organisations? Why are more design agencies being commissioned to work collaboratively on projects that other organisations could also deliver through participatory approaches?

These questions were asked of all the professionals interviewed for this thesis, who are leading names in the field of collaborative social design and innovation, and social policy. In addition, client testimonials were gathered from a range of socially focused design companies³⁶ to give another perspective. The responses can be split into two categories: the skills designers possess that make them proficient at collaboration (**co-design** qualities); and the qualities that make them proficient at solving problems and innovating (**co-design** qualities).

³⁵ Organisations such as London Sustainability Exchange and Groundwork work with the local communities to address social sustainability challenges. They are not design agencies and therefore do not call the approach to their work co-design, but they are developing solutions to problems (i.e. designing) and doing so in collaborative manner. Often the work they do is classed as co-creation.

³⁶ Engine, Live|work, Thinkpublic, and Uscreates.

9.2 Co-design qualities

9.2.1 Visual Communication Skills

Given that the job of the designer includes interacting with other specialists, they must have an ability to work in interdisciplinary teams and to establish good interpersonal relations. Designers are specialists in human communication, and their specific medium is visual (Jorge Frascara 2004:4).

Designers have an ability to visually communicate messages, concepts and strategies. This is rarely found in other professions. The design professionals interviewed unanimously identifying visual communication skills as distinguishing them from other professionals working in the field of socially sustainability, and contributing to designers being commissioned.

Visual communication is an inherent part of design:

Designers are communicators. The difference between a product designer and an engineer is that a product designer really wants a product to communicate with the user. Jonathon Ives' iPod tells you to hold it in your hand, push it here, look after me... You look at it and you clearly know what to do with it. It clearly wasn't designed by an engineer. So much of what you are taught as a designer is about communication (Campbell 2010).

A social organisation, consultancy or charity may work collaboratively with the people at the heart of the social challenge, but it is the designers' visual communication skills that enhance the participatory design process by: producing attractive engagement methods; tools to gather insightful information; prototyping ideas; and giving visual presentations to clients and citizen.

Working with users in a visual way enables us to engage them outside their traditional responses. That way you are able to probe quite fast and much more deeply into people's otherwise quite set responses to questions that they then are able to reflect upon in partnership with you, in a way they might not be able to if it was just a traditional interview or a focus group (Vanderbeeken 2011).

Designers' visual communication skills can provide a common language (Vanderbeeken 2011) that translates the strategic language of social sustainability within the public sector and the emotional language and experiences of the public. This was recognised as a vital skill in social design by Papanek in 1971:

Often, more complex problems can be attacked only by teams of specialists, speaking their own professional jargon. Industrial designers, who are members of such a team, find that, besides fulfilling their normal design function, they must act as a communication bridge between other team members. Many times the designer may be the only one able to speak the various technical jargons; because of his educational background, the role of team interpreter is forced upon him. So we find the industrial designer becoming the team synthesist, a position to which he has been elevated by the default of people from the other disciplines (Papanek 1971:28).

Although the design professionals interviewed thought visual communication was a contributing factor in their being commissioned, none of the client testimonials referred to it. The application of visual communication skills are subtle, such as using pictures to explain an idea rather than words, or laying out information so it is easy to navigate and understand. It is an extremely effective way to communicate, but may be not groundbreaking, or obvious enough to warrant recognition from the commissioning organisations. To adopt and adapt the quote below, visual communication is only recognised when it is 'exceptionally bad' or 'exceptionally good', not when it is a consistent part of working systems.

Like design, the weather it is always there, but we speak about it only when it is exceptionally bad or exceptionally good (Antonelli 2011).

An interview with Matt Ward, the Head of Goldsmiths College's BA Design programme, provided a more cynical thought about designers' visual communication skills and how it helps in their communication:

We [designers] are engineers of seduction. We make shit look good. So however creative or clever a solution to something is, what design does, which no management consultancy will ever be able to do with their terrible PowerPoint presentations, is that we will present it in a way that looks good. We seduce people with our skills because we have a certain aesthetic ability to present things to look sexy. I loathe it as an idea, but I think it is one of design's strengths. We can help people understand complex situation and notions (Ward 2010)

Alice Casey at NESTA's *Public Service Lab* also spoke on this:

You can create amazingly persuasive things through design, through videos, etc. You will take them into a public service and wow them with it and sell it, tell a story

and motivate people. But I wonder if the story being told is a true robust reflection to then base public spending on (Casey 2010).

These statements support that designers' communication skills are useful when presenting complex situations, notions and ideas to clients or the public. However these observations raise questions regarding the appropriateness of designers addressing social sustainability. If design can sell anything, is it selling the right thing? Is it simply selling itself, making itself attractive to the public sector when it may not be the best profession to do so? When reading the selected clients' testimonials, not one of them speaks about the impact that the use of co-design had in addressing a social challenge. Instead they praise the design approach or the new ways of looking at problems and the methods of engaging stakeholders. When co-design starts to be properly evaluated in the future (see chapter 13), it will become clear whether designers have been selling co-design solely through their communication abilities, rather than their evaluated track record.

9.2.2 Engagement

Client testimonials:

Uscreates co-delivered a campaign with us to raise cancer awareness which is still being well received: a great example of how a collaborative approach can establish successful solutions! Uscreates really engaged with the community and facilitated exciting new ways for volunteers to speak to people about the cancer campaign message (Davies 2011).

Your [Thinkpublic's] approach to engaging people who need services in the design process is an inspiration to everyone working in healthcare and an essential way forward. The thoroughness of your approach meant that the engagement was meaningful and central to the design, and has helped to move ideas into development (Ashley 2011).

Engagement was regularly referred to in client testimonials as a valued quality. Interestingly, none of the designers interviewed acknowledged engagement as a distinguishing selling point. Engagement is such a fundamental part of co-design, it may have been considered to be stating the obvious. Also, engagement is viewed by the designers as an outcome of co-design, rather than a quality designers possess. When the interviewed designers discussed engagement, it was referred to as 'enabling'.

9.2.3 Enablement

In David Kelley's *Ten Faces of Innovation* (2006) he writes about the different personas needed to innovate, one being the 'Collaborator'. The Collaborator brings different groups of people together to facilitate the creation of "new combinations and multidisciplinary solutions" (Kelley 2006:10). This is a skill that designers are increasingly being asked to use in participatory design, and was referred to as 'enabling' by the interviewees. Enabling project stakeholders to work together, and create and deliver solutions is a big task, but one these designers feel they are doing successfully.

A component of enabling is facilitation. The co-design process requires designers to facilitate collaboration between a range of people through a creative problem solving process and by doing so enable them to generate solutions. Alice Casey at NESTA, explains the benefits:

There is a project we worked on without designers and it didn't have as much structure in it and it wasn't a design or facilitated process. It was a case of putting users and service providers in a room together to see what they came up with. I feel that the facilitated aspect of design structure is really valuable, and users need encouragement, and they need tools for design. When I say 'tools', I don't mean hard tools, but a structured process of going through a problem to idea. It's the role of the facilitator. A designer is not coming in to be the expert, but coming in to facilitate others, and take the knowledge and expertise of others and facilitate it (Casey 2010).

The concept of 'enabling' and equipping people with skills is being discussed extensively in the design industry at the present time. In March 2010, *Inspired at Bedruthan Think Tank* was held by DOTT Cornwall to discuss themes emerging in design. During it, Professor Ezio Manzini observed that the "main role of the designer is to enable" (Manzini 2011). This was very much in line with New Labour's engagement agenda and therefore was, and still is, a quality that attracts public sector clients to working with design agencies.

The designers' skill to act as an enabling force is constantly being explored and developed by design agencies and supporting organisations such as the Design Council and NESTA. As an RSA booklet points out:

design takes problems away [...] But can design do more? Can it show you how the problem is to be solved without doing it for you? (Campbell 2009:2).

Under New Labour designing *for* people was shifted to designing *with* people. Is the next stage designing *by* people?

9.2.4 Jack of all Trades

Designer's aren't specialists – they're jack-of-all-trades, but they link it all together. This is unique (Stanton 2010).

As seen in chapter 8 design agencies have a broad remit of methods to produce deliverables that range from insight to the implementation of designs. With the expansion of their skill base, it is possible for designers to deliver a whole project. For the public sector commissioner, this has benefits. It is time efficient, as the work only has to be advertised and recruited for once. It can also result in more effective and efficient project management, as the likelihood of problems occurring when transferring work from discrete stages to different agencies is avoided.

The rest of the expression is: 'jack-of-all-trades, master of none'. Are designers spreading themselves too thinly, or are they successfully building up their remit? For independent freelance designers, it is probably the former, but within socially focused design agencies, employees are from a range of backgrounds and therefore able to offer the different services required at a high standard. Companies such as Live|Work, Engine, Thinkpublic and Uscreates were all founded by designers, but follow this multi-disciplinary model.

9.3 Co-design qualities

The qualities and attributes of designers are examined in much of the literature on design (Kelley and Littman 2006 ; Potter 2002), but there is none that examines why they are successful delivering the design element of co-design for social sustainability, and what affected commissioners to this.

9.3.1 'Seeing things differently'

A unique quality that many of the interviewees believed designers possess was difficult to sum up, but might be described as 'seeing things differently'. This is an observational skill that allows designers to assess a social challenge or situation in a new or different way and therefore design for it in a more innovative manner.

In David Kelley's *10 Faces of Innovation* there is, in addition to 'The Collaborator', a figure called 'The Anthropologist'. The chapter on the Anthropologist starts with a quote from Marcel Proust: "The real act of discovery consists not in finding new lands, but in seeing with new eyes" (qtd. in Kelley 2006:16)

The designers who were interviewed paraphrased this as 'seeing things differently'. Designers need first hand experience of the problems in order to come up with a design solution. Joe Heapy explained:

I think there is something about ways of seeing people, what people do and what people want to do, and it's a kind of applied empathy. I've come across it a lot with work in the public sector, people are saying 'I'm a trainee social worker, or I'm a trainee medical observer' and I've spent a day with you [the designer] and you see all this stuff very differently and make connections that I don't make. So there is this quality in ways of seeing that designers do bring, which perhaps comes from an ability to see. We don't have a monopoly on this, but you would be surprised on how difficult some organisations find it (Heapy 2010).

Emily Campbell believes designers see things differently because of their trained ability to regard "the part and the whole and how they fit together" (Campbell 2010). Most typically this occurs when designers have to think about how 'a part' they are designing fits in with 'the whole', or the bigger picture. So when researching and understanding a social problem, and generating ideas to address it, designers will be doing so within a bigger picture.

If I am designing a jug I need to know how this handle relates to the rest of it. As a graphic designer I need to know how this typeface and sizes will fit together to be optimally legible. So if you think of design as managing and manipulating this part-and-whole relationship, it's clear that designers could also apply it as methodical process to systems and services. They look at systems and services as if they are things, and strive for coherence as they would with an object or a layout. If you change one thing, what will be the implications on other things? (Campbell 2010)

The idea of 'seeing things differently' is a vague concept, yet something which should not be dismissed. Designers go through an education that promotes and encourages lateral thinking. The outcome of this training is obvious, evidenced in the designs produced. However understanding the value and outcome of lateral thinking is difficult to sum up. It becomes 'seeing things differently', which then sounds unsubstantial. Nevertheless, the fact that designers are taught how to think laterally implies that it can be taught to others. It then becomes a question of degree: even if this skill is transferred to clients, do they necessarily have the expertise in it to replace designers?

9.3.2 Prototyping

Prototyping is a skill that all designers are taught regardless of the type of design they practice, whether it is product, graphic, interior or fashion design.

A prototype, regardless of its fidelity, functionality, or how it is made, captures the intent of a design and simulates multiple states of that design (Warfel 2009:12).

Prototyping is a fundamental part of any design specialism, but a stage in a problem solving process that is often overlooked by non-designers. Prototyping differentiates the designers from other collaborative, socially focused organisations or consultancies. In general terms, consultants are theory based, and designers are practice based. “What’s the difference between theory and practice?” Albert Einstein once said. “In theory they are the same. In practice, they are not. (qtd. in Warfel 2009:15)”

‘Practice makes perfect’ and prototyping is the designer’s method of optimising a design through practice. Prototyping is a key part of the co-develop stage of co-design and turns service, systems or communication based ideas into ‘models’ to test in context.

Designers prototype: they mock up things very fast in real time. This is very different from the traditional piloting approach within the policy world, where you bring sense to something, you build a model in a very artificial environment that usually does not scale very satisfactorily. With a design approach, people can visualise what the solution is, get excited about it, and even prepare to commit resources to it, because there is a vision of what the difference might be. It is not a lifeless report on somebody’s desk (Cottam qtd. In Vanderbeeken 2011).

Although the above refers to the prototyping of products, the same sentiments apply to prototyping services, systems or communication channels and methods. For example when Uscreates prototyped a new smoking cessation service (a more informal and peer-led support group for female routine and manual workers – case study in chapter 8), they created a simulation of how the service would run, and the ‘touchpoints’ (i.e. the tangible elements of the service) that the service users would encounter. This produced advertising material, a session plan, activities to facilitate and a toolkit of resources to support the activities. The prototyped service was trialled by a group of women, who worked with the designers to make improvements and modifications for a second prototype.

Prototyping is an example of designers’ communication competency, a part of the problem solving process where the broad exploration of the problems and generation of ideas converge to provide visual communication of complex models, systems and/or services (Cooper 2011). Prototypes are piloted to understand the design’s successes, failures and limitations, and to make improvements. The more prototypes that can be made and piloted, the more likely the implemented design will be successful. As Frans Johansson explained at the *InterSections 2007* conference:

If you look at the number of simulations or prototypes or copyrights, whatever it is around a similar set of products, either way you will find that there’s a huge

correlation between the number of ideas that you've generated and try to make happen and your success as an innovator (qtd in Myerson 2007:6).

Although this is a time intensive exercise, in the long term it can be far more cost effective than implementing an idea which has not been fully tested. This is very important in the public sector, but civil servants rarely practice this rapid, iterative prototyping of ideas.

9.3.3 Risk Taking

Risk-taking was another quality cited by the design industry professionals, although unsurprisingly not by the clients. Again this quality is recognised in Kelley's *10 Faces of Innovation* in the role of the 'The Experimenter'. The risk-taking nature of 'The Experimenter' enables him or her to learn through "enlightened trial and error" (Kelley 2006:9). Calculated risks are taken in order to move a concept forward and turn it into a 'deliverable' ready for implementation. The RSA has acted on this through their *Design and Society Programme*:

Design and Society argues that design will be fundamental to closing the gap between our behaviour and our aspirations because of the particular resourcefulness that design represents. Ready to improvise and prototype, brave in the face of disorder and complexity, holistic and people-centred in their approach to defining problems, designers have a vital role to play today in making society itself more resourceful (Campbell 2009:1).

'Risk taking' in the public sector is a phrase full of problems due to the scrutiny of public spending. Trying out new approaches and ideas is particularly difficult to encourage within the public sector, despite the perceived desire and need for them. Most public sector commissioners in theory want an innovative solution to a problem, yet often this will not fit into current commissioning models and do not want to be held publically accountable if it fails.

Despite these constraints design agencies are being commissioned to provide innovations, but their ideas are often watered down to reduce the chance of failure. Risk taking is an aspect of innovation, and innovations are new ideas or ways of doing things, which naturally involve some element of risk. The public sector wants to be more innovative, yet does not have the ability or capacity to take risks, so that often, public sector innovations are not that innovative.

9.4 Creativity, Innovation, Connection

Reviewing the findings from this chapter, there are two overriding themes that accounted for why designers have been commissioned to work on participatory projects for social sustainability: 'creativity and innovation', and 'connection'.

The qualities which make a designer proficient at the collaborative element of co-design centre around the ways that they connect with commissioners, civil servants, front line staff and the public. They communicate with them visually, engaging them through tools and techniques, and then enable and empower them through participatory methods. This facility at connecting helps develop creativity, and produce innovative solutions.

The qualities that make a designer good at the problem solving element of co-design ('seeing things differently', prototyping and taking risks) can be summed up as creativity, and designers are able to co-design solutions to social challenges because of the connections they make with project stakeholders, and the creativity they are able to inspire in **them**.

In summary, designers connect with people's inherent knowledge and creativity, and are able to harness that to co-produce innovations.

9.5 Communicating the value of designers' skills

All of the qualities looked at in this chapter differentiate designers from other agents of social change. Although these qualities set them apart, they are a) not easy to explain or market to potential clients and b) not easy to understand without having seen a project in action or worked closely with a designer. Designers were first commissioned, therefore, not because of these qualities, but because of their perceived ability to innovate.

The difficulty of communicating the value of co-design was mentioned in a number of interviews with designers. When discussing the Young Foundation's role in promoting design within the public sector, Joop Tanis of the Young Foundation said:

When we speak to strategic authorities, PCTs, etc. about changing what they do, I talk at a number of levels – partly entrepreneurship, partly innovation, partly incubation – doing things away from the main stream, experimenting, failing – and partly bringing in other agencies and experts like designers who make us and help us look at things in different ways. However I don't think I have the knowledge of the total package that a designer could provide an organisation. So, I struggle explaining it, but maybe that is illustrative. If someone was to challenge me and say you use service designers – why? I would probably say it's because they are good at talking to patients, they are good at looking at things in different ways, they are good at putting things on paper and visualising it – but I don't know if that does designers justice. There may be quite a few things which are missing from there. That might be a lack of my knowledge or the profession not putting themselves out there (Tanis 2009).

On this note of designers not helping themselves, the Director of the NHS Institute of Innovation and Improvement, Lynne Maher, stressed that it was not only communicating the value of design that needed addressing, but being clear about how design can be integrated into the NHS: Designers immerse themselves into the NHS well, but need to also focus on how they can reflect NHS language, relevant policy points and NHS values in any communications so that people working in the NHS can see how design can fit and create value in the NHS system:

Designers immerse themselves into the NHS, but they don't immerse the NHS into design. Designers are poor in verbal presentation skills and using the language that the NHS understands (Maher 2009).

It was Maher's opinion that designers need to speak in both a visual and written language. The public sector operates along very traditional structures and the traditional outcome of a project is a written report. This is often contested by design agencies, which believe there are better, more engaging ways to communicate information to the project's professional stakeholders. This may be true, but the point that Maher makes is that for design to be commissioned widely, designers have to be adaptable and work within the existing public sector systems in order to reinforce co-design as a respected method of working.

SECTION 3

THE FUTURE OF CO-DESIGN AS A METHOD FOR PROMOTING SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

In May 2010, the majority of the research for this thesis had been completed and the task of writing it up was about to begin. At the same time New Labour had lost the general election and the Conservative/Liberal Democrats Coalition came into power. Such change in UK politics makes this chapter on the future of co-design even more important than before. As the Coalition has only been in office for a year, it is difficult to predict what changes may occur to co-design practice and its role in promoting social sustainability. It is possible however to review the Coalition's visions in the light of this research's findings in order to speculate on the future for co-design.

The future of co-design does not only depend on the political and social context in which it operates, but also on the designers developing the practice and the financial condition of the public and third sector organisations commissioning it. Other factors such as the education of new designers, the evaluation of the impact of co-design and the need for a codification of ethical conduct within the practice will also affect the future of co-design. This section is therefore divided into four chapters, each discussing an element that will have great impact on its future:

- The political and economic landscape
 - Demand for co-design
 - Promotion and support for co-design
- Design education
- The ethical implications of social design
- Evaluation of design impact

CHAPTER 10

THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

By reviewing the current political environment, the Coalition's plans for reform, and the outlook for non-departmental public bodies, it is possible to gather a perspective on the future demand for co-design within public engagement, service reform and health improvement.

10.1 Public Engagement

In David Cameron's first speech as Prime Minister he said:

Real change is not what government can do on its own. Real change is when everyone pulls together, comes together, works together, when we all exercise our responsibilities to ourselves, to our families, to our communities and to others.

And I want to help build a more responsible society here in Britain, one where we don't just ask 'what are my entitlements?' but 'what are my responsibilities?'. One where we don't just ask 'what am I just owed?' but more 'what can I give?' And a guide for that society, that those who can, should, and those who can't, we will always help (Cameron 2011).

The concepts of collaboration, responsibility and societal action that underpinned Cameron's first Prime Ministerial words sum up his vision for the UK: the 'Big Society'. As part of their 2010 general election manifesto the Conservative Party introduced this vision intending "to create a climate that empowers local people and communities, building a big society that will take power away from politicians and give it to people" (Conservative Party 2010).

The reality of a society that empowers local people and provides them with the power that politicians hold is not clear as yet. There have been calls for the public to take over the running of schools and local services, and to volunteer more on social projects, but little has been done to put this into practice. The lack of specifics has resulted in criticism of the Big Society idea, typified by Mary Beard's³⁷ article in the Times newspaper:

It isn't hard to see what will happen with all these Big Society initiatives. It's all very well to have the bright idea of the locals running their own bus route (. . .) The trouble is that running a bus route is a professional job, not for a group of local enthusiasts. How many bets that five years down the line, the enthusiasm has run out and there is no more bus route (Beard 2010).

³⁷ Mary Beard is a professor in classics at Cambridge and commentator on both the modern and the ancient world.

Will the Big Society work? Initial research by Ipsos Mori and IIPS into the Big Society concept is positive at a superficial level (R. Nash 2008). The public believe that volunteering time for the community is something we should do, and they would also like more control over issues that matter personally (particularly children's education). Many citizens - 57% (R. Nash 2008) - could already be categorised as 'community participants', supporting community programmes and helping their neighbours. However, far fewer people feel that volunteering is something that they could do due to time constraints, confidence and bureaucracy (Page 2010). There is also confusion over levels of community involvement, as there was with New Labour's engagement agenda. Can fundraising for a charity be classified as volunteering, or does it now revolve around public and voluntary service delivery, which is the Conservative Party's ultimate goal. There is a great different between volunteering time with a local charity and running a local library or a school.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to examine how the Big Society will develop, but to *attempt* to formulate a future for the programme in which co-design may feature. 'Attempt' is the key word, as to date there is no a clear strategy for achieving the Big Society. As a community development consultant, Gabriel Chanan, remarked in the RSA's work on *Connected Communities*: "there is no underlying coherence to (the Big Society) that is really explicit yet" (Rowson, Bromme and Jones 2010:1). Nor have many of the public heard of the Big Society³⁸, and the majority of people discussing the concept are the politicians and the broadsheet reading public.

Regardless of this, it is clear that the Big Society concept will influence public engagement, as more citizens are to be involved in a wider range of social matters. The role of participation and its supporting methods should be of increased importance, although whether co-design will feature specifically is unclear. On the one hand it is likely that the facilitation of participatory methods of working will still be 'outsourced' from some public and voluntary organisations, due a lack of expertise. On the other hand, as the Big Society is a programme devised to support a smaller state, in which there is less finance to commission agencies to facilitate engagement and collaboration with the public, the public sector organisations may deliver participation themselves.

Comparing the Big Society with the *Engagement Spectrum* (in chapter 7), the Coalition's plans appear to fit into the 'Delegation' section, which is a step along from New Labour's approach.

³⁸ Based on research carried out by Uscreates on 40+ people in November 2010.

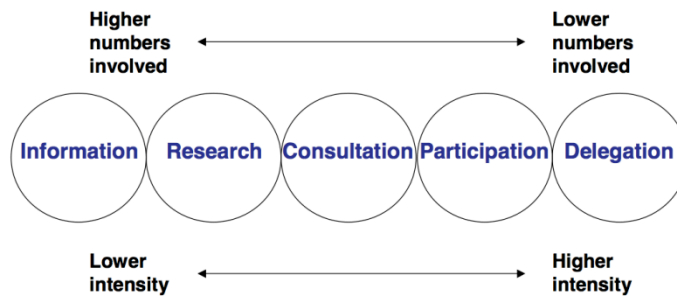


Figure 31. *The Engagement Spectrum, after Arnstein (Great Britain 2003b).*

The Coalition is taking on an advanced form of engagement: the delegation of responsibility to the public. This concept of redistributing power from the state to individuals, families and local communities are the Big Society's priorities:

- Give communities more powers
- Encourage people to take an active role in their communities
- Transfer power from central to local government
- Support co-ops, mutuals, charities and social enterprises
- Publish government data (Great Britain 2010a)

In order to achieve these (especially the first two points), co-design will have to become more focused on collaboratively **delivering** the outcomes that have been co-designed, which has been discussed in this thesis as 'co-delivery' or 'co-production'. What co-production does not make explicit, and perhaps this is an area for co-design to explore and excel at, is how relationships between the community and the public sector can be sustained and nurtured to ensure continued collaboration after the initial involvement and idea generation of a project.

Achieving changes in behaviour so that individuals and communities want to actively *deliver* interventions and services is key to building a 'big society', and will require building upon sometimes non-existent relationships within and between social networks. The Big Society is not, as Rowson, Broome and Jones point out in the RSA's *Connected Communities* paper, based on a notion of communities being nostalgic, inclusive and harmonious (Rowson, Broome and Jones 2010:1).

One of the key objectives of the Big Society is to get people "more involved" in their communities, in order to "reduce isolation" and "create stronger social ties" (Rowson, Bromme and Jones 2010:66). Communities are more than simply knowing who lives on your street. They are now about the factors which affect all our lives (health, education, justice, hygiene, etc), and addressing them at a local level. This was the rational behind New Labour's *Sustainable Communities* programme, and the Big Society could be viewed as the Conservative's version of building sustainable communities.

The difference between the Big Society and Sustainable Communities lies in their means of delivery: the Labour Government attempted it through providing more central funding for charities and public services; the current Coalition is attempting it by trying to persuade UK citizens to take on more responsibility for the services that are currently provided by government at all levels.

The co-design stakeholders within the design industry have aired responses to this strategy, publishing them in design magazines (Design Week 2010), in papers (DOTT Cornwall 2010), discussing the possibilities on internet forums (Our Society) and holding seminars³⁹ to promote the role of designers within the Big Society. Designers have largely argued that they are experts in working collaboratively, and engaging the public and public sector employees to identify, generate and *implement* ideas to address social challenges. Designers' ability (which is currently based on vision, rather than track record) to produce outcomes delivered by the public, or in partnership with public or voluntary sector organisations, provides an innovative and cost effective offer:

We believe there are clear parallels in our work [DOTT projects] to the concept of Big Society. [...] Based on experience in DOTT 07 and DOTT Cornwall, key to the success of Big Society will reside in two factors; firstly motivating and building citizens' confidence and secondly by providing the skills and knowledge to take action. We believe Design can make this process of transformational change both exciting and practical (DOTT Cornwall 2010 4).

Successive governments have promoted innovation as important but have not led by example. The public sector has struggled to innovate. Government needs to save money by doing more for less, by using new approaches and more effective procurement. To transform and to deliver the Big Society vision, much needs to change. Design approaches are open, collaborative and human-centred. They engage public sector workers, civic society and citizens in the development and delivery of effective services (Temple 2011:19).

Social designers have been developing these techniques for years under New Labour, but alone this is not enough. Designers need to provide evidence of the added value they bring. Even with this, the budgets to commission them need to be available.

³⁹ In July and August 2010 the Institute for Government, NESTA and the Design Council hosted a series of seminars on what the Big Society means for a range of social challenges.

10.2 Service Reform

To date, the Coalition will be remembered for two things: the Big Society and the budget cuts to public services. On the 21st October 2010, the Coalition government outlined its proposed spending cuts of £81 billion over 4 years to rescue the state's finances. Under New Labour, the public sector had grown to over 50% of the economy (Ipsos Mori).

To reduce costs within the NHS, the Coalition has started to reform public services, but in a very different way to New Labour. The proposed reforms consist of cutting the levels of bureaucracy between the patient and the NHS decision makers, and, most contentiously, giving GPs (the medical professionals who are deemed to understand their patients' needs best) the budgets to commission services. If this goes ahead, Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts will be dissolved by 2013 and replaced by GP consortia. These consortia will be responsible for the commissioning of the £80 billion of spending (White 2010).

Under New Labour, designers were commissioned to use co-design methodologies within public service reform to ensure user-centred services. Under the Coalition, the focus of service reform is about efficiency and financial savings. Service user choice still remains, but this is no longer the primary focus. It is unlikely, therefore, that designers will be commissioned for the same types of service improvement projects as they were under New Labour.

At present however, little has changed, due to the nature of phasing in a new government, and working systems taking time to change at local government and local NHS levels. At the time of writing this section, the new 2011 financial year has begun, and at Uscreates we have noted a reduction in the number of briefs being commissioned for using participatory approaches in service reform. This is in part due to many public sector redundancies and new budgets, which both take time to organise before new work can be commissioned, but it may also be a sign of things to come.

Despite these set-backs for agencies using co-design, the government's desire to ensure that the public participate in the delivery of public services will require co-design if it is to have a chance of succeeding. It will mean, however, that design agencies will need to reposition their offer taking into account a co-production method of working. This approach will need to be promoted to Local Authorities, and, if they come into being, to the new GP consortia within the NHS.

In order to commission co-design, GPs will need to understand the concepts of participation and social innovation, and be aware that design organisations exist and offer this service.

To promote that understanding, the Royal College of General Practitioners has set up the *Centre for Commissioning* in partnership with the NHS Institute of Innovation and Improvement. They will be championing innovation within commissioning, amongst other objectives. To

promote awareness, organisations such as the Design Council will have to continue being advocates of co-design, especially when used within a service design specialism. Design supporting organisations are fully aware of this, as an extract from Martin Temple's review of the Design Council points out:

There remains a role for a national body for design: design, and in particular service design, remains under-utilised by industry and the public sector, and represents a major economic and social opportunity for the UK (Temple 2011:12).

As part of *Designing for the 21st Century Research Initiative*⁴⁰, research studies were carried out to investigate scenarios for the design industry leading up to 2020. Two of the study's conclusions can be viewed positively for service design; "the greatest growth [for the design industry] is anticipated in the service and strategic design fields" (Williams et al. 2009:52) and "design specialisation will increase, particularly within the health, corporate social responsibility and eco-sustainability fields" (Williams et al. 2009:53). If service design continues to grow within the field of health, and if the Design Council and designers can clearly demonstrate and evaluate the economic and social opportunities, co-design will continue to be perceived as beneficial to the public sector and public service reform, and therefore commissioned.

Tighter budgets exist in local government as well as the health service. On October 20th, 2010, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, delivered his spending review for the period up to 2014-15 to the House of Commons. The provision of local government finance will be reduced by 25.6% over the four year spending review period (though this will exclude spending on fire services and police), that is, spending will be reduced by £6.68 billion (Thraves 2011).

It is difficult to say to what extent designers will continue working with Local Authorities on social projects in the future. It may become clearer in late 2011, when the newly allocated budgets for the financial year have been understood and planned for. Designers may need to reposition themselves, or start to find external funding for projects that councils want to pursue. Regardless of who funds the work, the design industry is making a case as to why design should be used in service reform, identifying where they can add value and why social design specialisms are of use:

Government policy to deliver citizen-centred public services at greater value for money will require senior public policy-makers and commissioners to understand how to use design, amongst other things, to achieve innovation (Temple 2011:12).

Similarly, a case is being made by the design industry for civil servants to co-design with

⁴⁰ *Designing for the 21st Century Research Initiative* was funded by the AHRC and the EPSC. The research was carried out by the Universities of Salford and Lancaster in partnership with British Design Innovation, the UK's design industry body.

citizens to achieve efficient innovations that will provide value for money (Design Council 2008a). This is a big claim to make as there has been little evaluation of cost saving through co-design. This is not to say that co-design cannot show any benefits to the public sector: while it may not be possible to directly account for savings, anecdotal evidence shows that services designed around the user meet their needs more effectively, and that this is often achieved on relatively small budgets, therefore providing value for money (Design Council 2008a). However the scale of the projects that designers are working on is small, resulting in localised change that does not affect the larger society. Effectiveness at local level may chime with the Coalition's interest in 'localism', but evidence must mature past the anecdotal.

10.3 Health improvement

New Labour invested large sums of money in health promotion and health improvement programmes, with the aim of tackling health related social challenges. Under the Coalition, public health is one of the few areas of public spending that has escaped the budget cuts, and been ring-fenced, which is promising for co-design. Andrew Lansley, the Health Secretary, explained that it had been ring fenced because it was “for the purpose of securing health improvement”, and not because Whitehall did not trust councils to spend the money effectively (Phillips 2010).

What we're doing with public health is saying there is a ring-fence for health improvement but actually the range of what can be comprised within your health improvement strategy is in itself very wide.

All that local government has to do is demonstrate that they are achieving the objectives of improving health and health inequality. They have very considerable flexibility in how they can apply it (Phillips 2010).

Designers' work in health improvement will continue, but it will not be a continuation of the way they operated under New Labour. First, it is intended that the responsibility for public health will be transferred from the NHS Primary Care Trusts (which are being abolished) to Local Authorities by 2013. Second, Local Authorities will form 'Health and Wellbeing Boards', responsible for spending the public health budget and overseen by a new organization, *Public Health England*. Essentially *Public Health England* will be what the Department of Health is to primary and secondary care – a department responsible for the overall policy for public health matters. *Public Health England's* main role will be to reduce health inequalities by reducing poor health and premature death – prevention rather than cure. Some of the biggest challenges the organisation will have to face are obesity, smoking and alcohol dependency (Great Britain 2010b). Design agencies will need to become familiar with the new context the health improvement will be commissioned within and advocate their services within it.

Anna Dixon, Director of Policy at The King's Fund, said in relation to Public Health England,

“Ministers are right to focus on how people can be nudged to adopt healthier lifestyles. But as the ban on smoking in public places has shown, strong state intervention is also needed to change people’s behaviour and meet the challenges posed by smoking, alcohol misuse and obesity” (Dixon 2011).

In addition to Public Health England, the Coalition has also set up the Behavioural Insight Team, which is also referred to as the ‘nudge unit’. As can be seen from Dixon’s comment above, there is much talk within public health of ‘nudging’ and behaviour change rather than ‘nagging’.

The emphasis on prevention through behaviour change is important for designers to acknowledge. It could be argued that design often has an element of behaviour change to it, whether it is the design of the hard seating in McDonald’s that ensures a fast turnover over, or the design of an advertisement that encourages you to buy a product. Behaviour change in the area of social sustainability is complex, and involves elements of psychology, sociology and anthropology. Many established design agencies working in these areas (IDEO, Uscreates, Participle) have made partnerships, or employ people in-house with expertise in the social sciences, which should help them compete for the limited budgets available in health improvement work and provide robust and effective outcomes. Newer socially focused design agencies need to make these partnerships in order to survive in a financially tight market.

That said, there is currently finance available for health improvement work, although more is likely to be done in-house to ensure ‘efficiency’. However, for design agencies paid from public health budgets, the work may be more elusive, as any ‘non essential’⁴¹ marketing campaigns have been banned by the government.

10.4 The future of the intermediaries

The Big Society concept has been accused of being a smoke screen for the Conservative Party’s budget cuts and a new, more palatable name for creating a smaller state. The budget cuts were announced in 2010 and include a large shake up of the public sector, with many organisations, which supported the design industries involvement in New Labour’s social sustainability, being downsized or abolished.

We know that the organisations commissioning socially focused design agencies will have tighter budgets and new agendas (although the need for participation and innovation remains), and that the design agencies will have to adapt to these changes. But will the reduction in size of these intermediary organisations be detrimental to the continued development and practice of

⁴¹ Announcement email made to COI partners of the 2nd June 2010. Essential campaigns have been classed as:

- where the government has a duty to provide people with information e.g. changes to legislation or public services;
- where providing the public with information is critical to the effective running of the country e.g. information about paying taxes, recruitment of armed forces; or
- where there is unequivocal evidence that campaigns deliver measurable benefits relating directly to immediate public health and safety.

co-design, or have they actually served their purpose in setting up a market place where co-design is recognised and commissioned within pockets of the public sector? Will it become obvious there will always need to be organisations that bridge the gap between government and the design industry, and champion the work, or is the market now sustainable without them?

10.4.1 The Design Council

The Design Council is currently in the process of downsizing as a result of Martin Temple's review, commissioned by the Coalition. The review concluded that it is important for government to support organisations and environments for innovation and acknowledges that design is fundamental to the government's innovation and growth agenda. It therefore recommends that the Design Council should continue to exist, but that the current quango model should be changed to a Royal Charter charity with reduced funding from government (Temple 2011). With this reduced funding, like many other non-departmental government bodies in similar positions, the role of the Design Council needs to do more for less and achieve even greater value for money.

Although the Design Council is becoming an independent organisation, it will work in close partnership with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, acting as a broker for design agencies or working in partnership with them. The Design Council's work will now focus on three areas outlined in Temple's review: "responsive to industry, advise government, and help the public sector to demonstrate design excellence" (Temple 2011:5). The methods by which the Design Council demonstrates design excellence in the public sector could be pivotal to the success of co-design in the future, as it was their past demonstrative programmes, such as DOTT and *Public Services by Design*, that played a key role in generating understanding, support and commissions for design agencies.

In the Temple review, it was stated that "losing the Design Council would be damaging to the UK's design reputation globally and would undermine the government's efforts to provide the conditions for innovation and business growth"(Temple 2011:7). Although this quote does not mention its role in social sustainability and public sector innovation, it does raise the discussion about the role of organisations such as the Design Council and NESTA in supporting design. Few countries have a Design Council or design and innovation supporting bodies and this thesis has concluded that they have been essential to the growth of co-design in the public sector. If other countries were to consider using co-design as a tool for social sustainability, it would be recommended that they set up a similar supporting organisations.

10.4.2 The NHS Institute of Innovation and Improvement

NHS Institute of Innovation and Improvement will be abolished after a review of arms lengths bodies by the Department of Health (Great Britain 2005c:5). However the functions of the NHS Institute that focus on improving quality and building capacity within the wider system will be

transferred to the NHS Commissioning Board. For the remaining functions, there are currently suggestions that they could continue through alternative commercial delivery models (e.g. as a social enterprise or independent membership organisation).

Without the NHS Institute, there will not be a specific health related organisation championing co-design. The NHS Institute was different to the Design Council and NESTA as it aimed specifically to promote innovation within the health services, rather than across private and public sector industries. Without it, innovation will still be promoted and supported in the NHS through QIPP (Quality, Innovations, Productivity and Prevention) a large scale transformational programme for the NHS to improve quality of care and make up efficiency savings by 2014-15 (Department of Health 2011).

During an interview with Joop Tanis from the Young Foundation just prior to the budget cuts in 2010, QIPP was discussed. It had just been put into practice and this was seen as an indication of ensuring that innovation was at the forefront of decision making. Tanis said that 'quality' is about making sure everything is the best it can be. 'Productivity' is being more clever about the resources available and how to make them count, and 'innovation' is the bridge between the two, and the only thing that will unlock radical improvement.

Through QIPP, large numbers of NHS staff are to lead and support innovative change that addresses quality and productivity. Tanis raised the point that within the culture of innovation, co-design is not prominent enough to be the key specialism delivering this engagement for innovation, which is still seen in the traditional sense of getting a new product or a new pathway developed.

Co-design could be the method to deliver the QIPP agenda, but for this to become reality, an internal advocate, like the *NHS Institute*, is needed. The Design Council, NESTA, the Young Foundation and the RSA can all play the role of advocate, however in relation to the size of the NHS, their reach is limited. Due to this, the whole of the design industry will have to continue demonstrating and marketing their skills to address social sustainability topics. As Lauren Tan, a PhD student at the Design Council and Deborah Szebeko, founder of Thinkpublic, wrote in their paper *Co-designing for Society*:

There has never been a more critical time for designers to be working with government, the public sector, civil society and citizens to help "reinvigorate public services under pressure from a more demanding public, increasing social complexity and overstretched resources." Designers bring creativity and design to support others in thinking differently, creatively and resourcefully about addressing social challenges of the 21st century (Szebecko and Tan 2009:585).

10.4.3 NESTA

In October 2010, the Government announced that NESTA would be moving from the public to the voluntary sector and become a charitable company (NESTA 2011). Unlike the changes that have occurred to the Design Council and the *NHS Institute*, their endowment structure means that this has had little impact on the finance that they have available to fund co-design and co-production work.

Operating as a charitable company will strengthen their independence to “develop ambitious models of innovation” and their ability to “work across different sectors (. . .)bringing together ideas from a wide range of perspectives, and to assume a greater burden of risk than others” (NESTA 2011:5). This can only be positive for their work to promote and integrate co-production within the public and voluntary sector, and it is likely design agencies will have a supporting role to play.

CHAPTER 11

DESIGN EDUCATION

The political and economic climate will have a direct bearing on the commissioning of social design agencies and the use of co-design. Another factor is design education and whether future designers are encouraged and supported to use their skills in promoting social sustainability and developing co-design methods.

11.1 The role of design education in co-design

It is important to recognise that the designers working in the field of social design were not specifically taught this specialism or its methods. However their training in design (whether it was product, graphic or interaction) has been important in shaping their work. Design education provided designers with the skills, techniques and ambition to work in new and participatory ways as well as the ability to envision new socially sustainable specialisms for design within the public sector.

None of the founders of social design agencies had prior knowledge of using design to address social challenges. It is a skill they have developed through the formation of their companies and through the projects they have worked on. The lack of prior experience has enabled designers to invent many creative ways to collaborate with the public and the public sector, and allowed a freedom to experiment with co-design. The absence of an existing structure or framework to work within has allowed designers greater freedom, but has also meant that much of the work has had to evolve through trial and error.

With less room to make mistakes in the public sector now, due to tight budgets and a focus on efficiency savings, current and future designers must be more rigorous, learning from past projects and identifying what has been successful and what has not. This is of most importance to design students and recent graduates, as they will need to have a thorough understanding of co-design practice if they are contemplating working in the field of social sustainability, and even more so if they plan to set up a design agency, or as a freelancer.

11.2 Developing designers to grow the industry

Currently co-design for social sustainability receives attention within design education due to the Design Council's endorsement and the general awareness and interest in sustainability. This in turn has resulted in many students and graduates looking for jobs and internships with the existing social sustainable design agencies. The interest in working for a socially focused design agency is positive, however it is not what is needed for advancing co-design. The existing design agencies spend a relatively large proportion of time and resources in marketing their services, networking, writing tender proposals and devising potential projects, all with the aim of generating work in order to maintain their businesses. As the work is not in high demand, there

is little need to regularly employ new designers. What **is** needed is for new agencies to form, grow interest in co-design within the public sector and deliver work that demonstrates its benefits. This in turn will help to grow the market for co-design, which will benefit these designers and existing agencies, and increase employment in the future.

NESTA's Creative Pioneer Programme, was fundamental in financially and contextually supporting new agencies to form when interest in co-design was first emerging. However the programme does not exist anymore. As a result the design industry will have to rely on design education to inspire and instigate students and graduates to form their own companies, while making them aware that they will have to generate demand for their services.

11.3 To teach or not to teach co-design?

Entrepreneurialism is not traditionally taught within design education, but it is an important skill that students should learn if they want to work with the public and voluntary sector. Without comprehensive information about the 'co-design industry', and how to generate work within it, new designers may be discouraged setting up their own practice, and work elsewhere in the design industry. This will hinder the growth of the co-design 'market'.

In *Social Animals: tomorrow's designers in today's world*, design education is presented as failing to provide students with the skills to enable them to work within areas of service based problems, especially in the arenas of social sustainability and the public sector (Parker 2010). The paper maintains that design needs to move through a paradigm shift as design education is still taught within the framework of the industrial era. We still need conventional designers being taught material knowledge, methods and processes, but there should be more emphasis on research and communication skills, and ethical practice.

When working with people on co-design projects, students need to recognise that participation will have an impact on those people's lives. There needs to be an ethical code of practice to prevent designers treating participants insensitively or instrumentally (RSA 2009).

By teaching the skills mentioned in chapter 9, designers will be equipped with the qualities needed to co-design and work in the field of social sustainability. Entrepreneurialism and the skills in chapter 9 are not unique to co-design and can form the foundations that any designer can then add to their area of interest. Therefore a question is posed as to whether design students should be taught to co-design and/or the specialisms that use it, or should be taught the skills that can be applied to co-design practice.

Over the past five years, some universities **have** responded to the development of the social design specialisms that have emerged. Northumbria University has created a service design

undergraduate degree (focusing on both commercial and social service design); Dundee University has an MA in 'Design Ethnography', and Middlesex University has an MA in 'Health and Social Marketing'. Design for social sustainability has become a 'fashionable' subject area which students want to study, but do these courses teach the right qualities for work in this area, or simply review the work that has been done to date and encourage students to replicate the methods, process and tools which have already been created by the existing agencies?

Dundee University teaches students how to generate insights and requirements from a user group by using a range of tools, techniques and theories underpinning ethnography and to ensure that the results of the research are both effective and usable. Ethnography ethics, and the controversies surrounding the practice are also taught (University of Dundee). The course structure is rigorous and in-depth, however it appears to be lacking in creativity and developing new ways to expand the practice. A similar scenario is found with Middlesex University's Health and Social Marketing MA (Middlesex University).

From personal experience, meeting with design graduates who hold a degree in service design, or with a portfolio of 'co-design' projects, I can see that their work refers to methods and tools that were created by many of the existing designers in the last 10 years and address subject areas that have been tackled numerous times. This is to be expected from courses that have limited case studies and materials to teach from. As a result, however, there is little to differentiate the work and it is rarely visionary. As co-design is a still emerging specialism, employers want to see new ideas for developing co-design.

Designers practicing service, social or transformation design did not 'study' it, but have developed their practice, including the use of co-design. Therefore the designers have a deeper understanding of what methods and tools are needed, rather than being taught it. Although graduates have a broad knowledge of the topic area, it is from reviewing past work, in the way a design history course would do, rather than developing it as a practice for the future.

Deborah Szebeko observed that one of the hardest parts of scaling up the co-design within the public sector, is recruiting the people with the right skills (Szebeko 2011). On paper many appear to have them, having studied service design or its equivalent, but in practice there is something missing. Szebeko thinks it is often common sense, and Zoe Stanton at Uscreates believes it is entrepreneurialism (Stanton 2010 ; Szebeko 2011). Designers may have studied the processes and methods of co-design, but find it difficult to adapt and develop them to situations and scenarios outside of hypothetical projects. This suggests that more 'live' projects within education would be beneficial.

Matt Ward at Goldsmiths College, believes that the s specialisms that use co-design should not be taught in design education:

When people say why aren't you teaching service design at Goldsmiths, my response is that we are teaching the things that service design came out of, which is engaging in a social, contextually orientated way, being sensitive to and understanding the context in which you are designing. That's where it comes from. And that's why a lot of our students are really good at moving into the area and doing well at it.

We think creating an agenda within design that engages in political and social agendas of understanding what the world is, and how you place yourself in it is at the heart of our course and has been for 15 years (Ward 2010).

Emily Campbell agrees:

Should we be teaching service design? I don't think so, because what has bought designers a place at the table is what they learnt at design school when nobody mentioned service design. They learned design by practising coherence and economy of form on things. I'm not sure you're training could be so rigorous or explicit on intangible things (Campbell 2010).

The approach to education that is alluded to could be summed up as teaching 'design thinking'. Goldsmiths is well placed to take this approach, as it is renowned for its conceptual approach to creativity. The founders of Uscreates came from Goldsmiths, as did the Service Design Director of Sidekick Studios (who used to work at Engine), the Senior Service Designer at Prospect (who worked for RED at the Design Council in 2006), and the Director of HarringtonKatz, Joseph Harrington, who has worked for Engine, Participle and Uscreates.

Goldsmiths College has produced many more designers working in this field in the UK as compared with other design schools. This is not to say they lead in the field of socially sustainable design and co-design, however they did take the step of embedding their eco-design degree programme into their regular design degree in 2006. This was when designing for social challenges had started to become of widespread interest within the design industry, and was being reflected in the work students were producing. This heightened interest reflected a greater sophistication in the sustainability and ecological discourses. People started to think about issues such as carbon offsetting, food miles and recycling, rather than buying hemp products and organic food.

11.4 Non-academic co-design education

The design graduates of Goldsmiths provide a strong argument for a broad and exploratory design education. However there are good examples of alternative ways of developing socially focused designers.

The RSA supports and develops design for social sustainability and more specifically co-design, by providing exploratory briefs for design agencies and for students. In 1924, as part of the RSA's advocacy of good design, the organisation set up a student award scheme, which aimed to link education and industry. The scheme still exists today and is now called RSA Design Directions, set up in 2000 to provide an opportunity for emerging young designers to show how design could be used to create genuine change.

In 2007/2008 the RSA asked Thinkpublic to write a brief in collaboration with Involve, a research agency in public engagement. Alice Casey, who now works for NESTA's *Public Service Lab*, was working at Involve when the brief was created. It focused on social innovation, which was a new direction, and advocated a user-centred, social focus for design. Previous briefs had been far more traditional, with a product focus. The idea was something that NESTA seemed particularly interested in driving forward – putting less emphasis on product and more on process. They sponsored the brief and brought in Thinkpublic to provide a co-design approach, and Involve as the experts in social empowerment and involvement (Casey 2010). Since this brief, the RSA has provided other projects that focus on co-design for social change, including two that have been supported by DOTT.

By writing these briefs for design students, the RSA is actively promoting the practice of co-design to a new generation of designers. Students receive mentoring from individuals and organisations in the field and a 'real life' experience of co-design. In a similar way to the RSA, the *Helen Hamlyn Centre* for design research at the Royal College of Art (RCA), offer a research centre for post-graduate students to explore people-centred design and innovation. "Its multi-disciplinary team of designers, engineers, architects, anthropologists and communication experts undertake practical research and projects with industry to advance an approach to design within the RCA that is people-centred and socially inclusive" (Royal College of Art 2009:3).

Most recently, DOTT Cornwall plan to open an *Academy for Innovation and Research* in March 2012, to be housed in University College Falmouth. It will incorporate some of DOTT's co-design methods and skills in an educational programme, and will also act as a creative hub for research and innovation work with local businesses. The intention is to train the next generation of designers in collaborative and service design methods.

11.5 Design education investigation

In 2011, the *Design Commission* began an investigation into the role of design education with a 'call for evidence'. The *Design Commission* was established by the *Associate Parliamentary*

*Design and Innovation Group*⁴² to understand how design practice can be developed and supported through education in order to pursue national objectives for the “economy, business, society and the individual” (Montgomery 2011).

The investigation reflects a concern that the quality of design teaching and creativity will be affected by budget cuts. Vicky Pryce, Senior Managing Director of Economics at FTI Consulting, and Baroness Janet Whitaker, a Labour politician, are chairing the investigation. A steering group including Sir George Cox, Professor Jeremy Myerson from the RCA and Dick Powell, from the design consultancy Seymourpowell supports them. The outcome of the investigation will be published in late 2011/early 2012.

The first two chapters of this section have focused on the political and educational environment to support co-design practice in the future. The next two parts take an inward look as to what designers and the design industry should be addressing to ensure the future development and practice of co-design: the ethical nature of collaboration and the evaluation of the impact of co-design.

⁴² The Associate Parliamentary Design and Innovation Group is a forum for open debate between parliament and the UK's design and innovation communities.

CHAPTER 12

THE ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF CO-DESIGN

12.1 Ethical guidance

In working on social sustainability projects, designers find themselves doing very different work from what they were originally trained to do: reducing crime (Design against Crime 2011), supporting disarmament processes (Miller et al. 2010), increasing Chlamydia screening rates (Cook 2009) are far from conventional design briefs. As an article written for *TouchPoint Journal* by Joseph Harrington and I observed:

We are finding ourselves enacting new roles and slipping over the boundaries and borders of traditional disciplines. These strange new worlds, full of the weird and wonderful, abundant with opportunities to show off how creative and positive thinking, can really get to grips with the stuff that matters. But with these opportunities come new and uncharted challenges that question our practice, our behaviours and our ethics (Cook and Harrington 2011:17).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, design courses and degrees did not, and many still do not, teach a collaborative, user-centred approach. Designers have trained themselves in new methods through trial and error, and through looking to the social sciences and anthropology. Therefore, inevitably there are ethical issues that arise, but are currently not properly understood or considered by designers and the design industry. Although there has been little discussion about ethics within the development of co-design, it is an element of the practice that presents some serious concerns and could be detrimental to its growth and use on a wider scale.

There is no excuse for a lack of ethical consideration in co-design practice. There are many lists of ethical guidelines available from academic institutions or membership organisations, such as the *Market Research Society* and the *Chartered Society of Designers*. None of the available ethical guidance, however, is specifically for collaborative design in social sustainability. Is this sufficient?

Looking to other disciplines, such as the social sciences, law and medicine, and their approach to ethics, there are complex and statutory regulations upheld by governing bodies whose role it is to describe and detail the requirements for ethical conduct to their members. In these cases, not only are the guidelines often a legal necessity, but breaking the code results in expulsion and institutional exclusion.

Although some design disciplines, such as architecture, have organisations advocating ethical standards, such as the *Royal Institute of British Architecture* many do not. The *Chartered Society of Designers*, the world's largest chartered body of professional designers representing all discipline, have a code of ethics that members sign up voluntarily to. There is no regulation from these organisations or any legal imperative to subscribe to them. As Cook and Harrington point out “the threat of legal action is rarely necessary to enforce ethical conduct, but the current incentive seems woefully inadequate” (Cook and Harrington 2011:17).

When interviewed about the role of ethics, Lynne Maher of the *NHS Institute*, said that the organisation went to the National Ethics Committee to seek guidance when they were working on their first design led improvement initiative. According to Maher, the National Ethics Committee reflected that the methods which were going to be utilised within the co-design project was akin to well recognised improvement methods rather than pure research or clinical experiment and therefore it did not need formal ethical approval. However, in order to maintain good ethical discipline, Maher developed a guidance form, which has been utilised on many other design led programmes. She noticed that designers were often not fully aware of the sort of ethical principles that are considered good standard in the NHS, for example designers would obtain photographs and quotes without also obtaining consent to use them in subsequent presentations and literature (Maher 2009).

In terms of furthering co-design practice, the ethical conduct of designers is crucial. To date co-design has occurred on a relatively small scale with no ethical dilemmas *reported*, however for this work to expand successfully, it will need to be policed by some version of a governing body, in the way that the *Royal Institute of British Architects* holds its members to a code of ethical professional conduct.

12.2 Ethical considerations of public participation

Co-design always involves working with the public - the target audience of the social challenge, in some capacity. Due to the nature of the work (engagement, service reform or health improvement), these citizens are more likely to live in deprived areas, have health related problems, and be in regular use of public services. The information that designers are trying to uncover can therefore often be sensitive. Using the DOTT co-design process terminology, some of the ethical considerations of each stage are outlined.

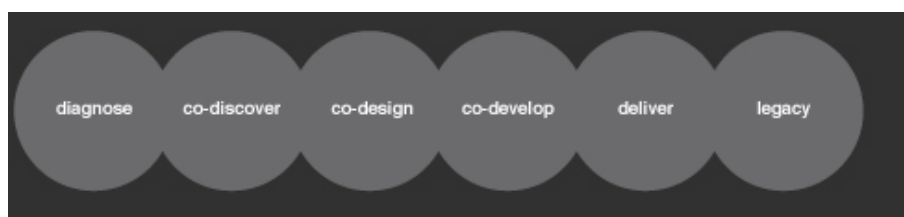


Figure 32. DOTT methodology (Design Council “Design Methods”).

Prior to starting the design process, there are a number of initial ethical considerations:

- How to ensure that citizens who are interested in participating with the designer fully understand what is being asked of them?
- How to ensure potential participants are physically and mentally healthy for the purposes of the work?
- Is there payment or an incentive scheme for citizens' involvement?
- Should all participants be paid the same, or should it reflect varying skills and competence?
- Would payment change the nature of who is involved and the quality of their input?

12.3 Ethical considerations of 'co-discovery'

Within the social sciences, the researcher carrying out the work would have been trained in ethical conduct. In many cases ethical approval would have to be sought to allow the work to take place. Yet within socially sustainability design specialisms, this is not considered necessary, and yet concerns arise when considering the role of the designer at the 'co-discovery' stage:

- Are designers equipped to deal with the sensitive information that they might uncover?
- Do all designers know what to do if they uncover information that is unrelated to the project they are working on, for example abuse, or addiction or emotional trauma?
- Are the citizens involved in the research fully aware of what will be asked of them and how this may affect them in the short and long term?

In regard to the second question, a designer who was interviewed for this thesis, told of a scenario in which he was presented with information (unrelated to the nature of the project he was working on) that he had to report to the police. He knew this was the right course of action as he used to work as a social worker, but this episode poses the question of what other designers would have done in this situation.

There are also concerns over protecting designers who are carrying out the 'co-discovery' stage. Many designers carry out interviews and design sessions in participants' homes, which raises yet more questions:

- Are designers instructed to go in pairs and have a check-in system with a third person?
- Are they told that if they feel uncomfortable in the setting they should leave? (This can be a problem if the designer is newly employed and wants to do a good job.)
- Are designers fully aware of what is being asked of them and the sort of information that they might uncover, and how this may affect them?
- Is there an opportunity and a procedure for 'downloading' thoughts, emotions and concerns to a third party after a demanding interaction with the public?

12.4 Ethical considerations of ‘co-design’, ‘co-development’ and ‘co-delivery’

The ethical issues that emerge from the co-design, co-development and co-delivery stages centre around responsibility and accountability. If citizens, civil servants and service providers are working with the designer, to whom does the intellectual property belong, and where does accountability for the design lie? If the answer is with the designer, then the idea that co-design is a collaborative and inclusive methodology is debatable. If it lies with the non-designing participants, are they aware of the responsibility that they are taking on? If the designers are getting paid to work on the design and development of idea, should the other ‘designers’ as well, and how should they be paid relative to the designer who has more formal expertise?

To answer these questions would be to write another thesis on the ethical challenges of co-design. This is not the purpose of this chapter, or of the thesis. The point of raising the questions about the ethical dilemmas in co-design is to highlight that many exist and little is being done to address them, and this in the future could be damaging to its reputation and therefore its growth.

To ensure a move towards ethical practice in co-design, a set of guidelines that answers these questions is the most obvious, but I would argue, least practical solution. Requiring designers to address a set of rules and questions before starting work would impinge on the organic and flexible way in which projects develop through co-design.

More practical tools and programmes, such as Uscreates’ ‘Ethics Buddy’, described below, would allow continual discussion and debate on ethical practice. This in turn would ensure that considering ethics in co-design becomes a useful method to improve practice. If the value of ethical considerations can be demonstrated in the quality of co-design work, it will raise interest and respect for the practice within the design industry and the public sector.

Case Study: Exploring ethics

Date: 2009 – 2011

Opening up the ethical debate is a loaded subject in a specialism which is attempting to grow from nothing. There are general ethical design guidelines available, such as “...cause as little harm as possible either directly or indirectly to living creatures, endangered species of plant or fauna, the atmosphere, rivers, sea and the land” (Chartered Society of Designers), but these are of little use in helping designers work more responsibly in complex social situations. Therefore in 2010, Uscreates embarked on an internal programme to question and further the role of ethics in design organisations using co-design.

The ethics programme brought together practitioners and academics in socially sustainable design and marketing to share stories of moral dilemmas and to openly discuss how day-to-

day practice could engage with notions of ethics. The sessions revealed a clear consensus that ethics as a component of design practice is not perceived as having value, but as something to 'get round' or 'over'.

We've talked to the NHS Institute about it [ethics] for a project that we thought we might get challenged on. The Institute actually developed a policy, which said that this is service improvement work, not research and therefore it's OK. They have had ethics people approve it and I think it's because of the depth of it.
Ethics Session Participant.

The conclusion from Uscreates sessions was that ethics should no longer be a box that is ticked in order to cover backs, but instead be recognised as an opportunity to actively reflect on and develop co-design practice. However before this challenge could be addressed, another became clear: there was a lack of a useful shared vocabulary or discourse on the subject, with both practitioners and academics struggling to maintain a useful dialogue to discuss ethical considerations. It became evident that, in order to continue to investigate ethics and to make a decent case for its value, there was a need for a shared discourse on ethics for design.

At the end of 2010, Uscreates launched a short pilot programme called 'Ethics Buddy', bringing design practitioners and academics together to explore how creating opportunities for more conversations could develop a shared discourse. Four academics met four practitioners for two conversations lasting approximately an hour each.

This enabled 'buddies' to develop shared definitions of ethical practice, which made, the 'buddies' feel more confident in making a case to their organisations or academic communities as to why ethical considerations should be given more attention during a project. One academic on the Ethics Buddy Programme reflected, "these conversations make justifying value easy". Another described the need for ethics to be a "ground-up thing, based on discourse and dialogue in a community of practitioners". The value of a shared ethics discourse is clear, but only possible if designers come together to examine the role and benefit of ethics in co-design practice in an honest and open manner.

As designers develop new areas in which co-design can be used, they will continue to find themselves in ethically complex situations. The role of ethics in co-design can no longer remain an afterthought. If it does, it will seriously jeopardise its future and its credibility. If the design industry can embrace and understand the value that ethical practice can bring, it will result in a better and more responsible collaborative practice that will be attractive to commissioners in the future.

CHAPTER 13

EVALUATION OF DESIGN IMPACT

There is a lack of evidence to show the effectiveness of co-design, a problem mentioned on numerous occasions in this thesis. In the context of the future of co-design, evaluation will play a crucial role in its longevity. There have been some attempts to understand how to evaluate participation, and what to evaluate. Involve's *True Costs* report indicated that the public sector spend over £1 billion annually on public participation, and therefore it is important to recognise that an assessment needs to be made regarding its achievements. However this is a difficult task, as the aims and outcomes of engagement are often intangible, such as social capital and active citizenship. In the case of co-design, not only must the benefits of the participation be measured, but also the impact of the co-designed solution to the social problem in question. Without these metrics, there is little to promote and sell co-design with, especially in a public sector that is under scrutiny regarding value for money.

13.1 Increasing awareness of evaluation

Under New Labour co-design was used by designers and commissioned by some public sector clients to achieve innovation. The act of using the participatory methodology also became an innovation in itself, and the success of projects therefore became defined by the innovative approach rather than the impact.

When the UK entered recession in 2008, there was a greater emphasis on accountability for public sector spending. The emphasis of evaluation became the impact of the innovation in addressing the targeted social challenge, and return on financial investment. As this focus of evaluation has taken place largely over the last three years, there is not a large body of evidence for its success. This is not to say that it is not successful, but many of the projects that design agencies have worked on will take a long time to evaluate. Few social challenges can be solved, or even affected in a matter of months, and engagement is particularly difficult to measure, as Lafferty observes:

One of the problems with these projects [sustainable community projects] is the difficulty in evaluating them. It is comparatively easy to measure the hard, tangible outputs like people completing training schemes. But it is much harder to assess the more intangible benefits, and the wider outcomes – like rebuilding community pride (Lafferty 2001:123).

13.2 Anecdotal evidence

Until now designers have relied on two qualities in promoting co-design: the engaging nature of the process and the anecdotal evidence of results. Neither are now enough to secure

commissions, and there is a general feeling within the design agencies that they would not want it to be.

Public sector clients have been drawn to design agencies for their new, creative and engaging approaches. This has resulted in a perception that working with designers is 'fun' and different, rather than effective in some cases. Deborah Szebeko spoke on this:

A lot of the feedback we get is that we make things fun. I'm not sure if we want to be associated with that. It's about taking a tough issue and making it accessible and I think design is really good at doing that (Szebeko 2011).

Alice Casey agrees:

The feedback I hear, which is anecdotal, is more around what an enjoyable and insightful experience it was [working with designers] and less about the impact. I think there is a danger there of putting that out there, as in design is fun, so we will commission them again (Casey 2010).

On the point of 'anecdotal evidence', many designers have stories that highlight the positive effects co-design brings, but they represent individuals rather than communities. As Lynne Maher said during an interview, designers are going to have to speak about cost and quality and not isolated cases of success (Maher 2009).

One of fundamental problems with anecdotal evidence was raised in the interview with Joe Heapy at Engine:

I was called by someone who is doing the evaluation of DOTT and my experience of design evaluations is that they are largely based on anecdotal evidence anyway and so generally what they do is to go and find the people who are most positive about it. I have a doubt in my mind, even if you found a non-anecdotal way to evaluate these projects that results in figures, it can only be of use if you can compare them to something else. So as a sector we will have to wait until there are enough examples of projects and there still isn't much (Heapy 2009).

Designers cannot sit and wait for this evidence to appear before they continue their practice. For this reason, they must continue to grow the practice of co-design using anecdotal evidence to secure commissions, while in the longer term ensuring that measures are in place for more rigorous evaluation.

13.3 Evaluating impact

The evaluation of design can be broken down into three areas; the evaluation of the design process, the evaluation of the design outcome and the evaluation of design impact.

The majority of evaluation to date has focused on the process of designing (e.g. did the techniques and tools developed for collaborative designing work?), and on evaluation of the design recommendations (e.g. is the product/service/programme innovative? Is it a good idea? Does it work well and is it user friendly?). Although both these aspects of evaluation need to continue, evaluating the impact of a design is critical. One of the major difficulties in evaluating impact is the small number of co-design projects that result in an implemented outcome. As discussed in chapter 7, many of the briefs commissioned require engagement work, 'insight gathering' or recommendations. They do not always result in implemented ideas, which are needed to evaluate impact. In addition, the projects are often run as pilot projects, which are too small from which to gather reliable data. Turning a pilot project into a fully implemented and operational service or system is problematic:

The outcome of projects results in either an idea or a campaign, or it means building a business or a service and making it operational. These organisations like NESTA and the Design Council aren't set up to make it operational. Once the dust has settled in this great campaign [of promoting co-design] that the cabinet office and number 11 is interested in, when it actually comes to making it real they loose interest a bit, as they don't know how to turn the ideas into a real service. Can you imagine 60 years ago the Design Council come up with a pilot project saying that loads of people are really ill and Hilary Cottam comes up with this idea for a service around helping people with their illness and it's called the National Health Service. They would have a big exhibition about it, write a publication and it would collapse. That would be it – the end of it. What they wouldn't have been able to do is roll out the NHS, they wouldn't know where to start if they had to try and build the National Health Service. There is a missing link between these NGO groups and designers working with them to develop all these wonderful ideas and then the reality of making them real, actually building them, actually scaling it up, actually operating them (Downs 2008).

Downs is talking in the context of projects run by NESTA and the Design Council, but the same sentiment can be applied to the public sector. Commissioning civil servants are able to identify a problem area, recognise that it needs innovation to address it, and commission an organisation to help develop recommendations. However they often do not have the ability to change the commissioning systems, the confidence to trial the changes, or the finance to make it operational.

Participle recognised these problems, and as a result their business model is different from the other design agencies' working in this field. They raise the capital to set up and run the projects they design, with or without help from the public sector, for example, their *Southwark Circle* project (refer to page 149). Despite this, their assessment of the programme is currently not evaluating the impact, which would focus on how *Southwark Circle* members have benefited from the programme and how the state has benefitted financially in terms of savings. Instead Participle's website states: "monthly take up of members continues to outpace our predictions, beating first year targets by 17%" (Participle. "The Circle Movement" 2011). This is an evaluation of the design itself, confirming the model they have set up is working and attracting people.

Financial evaluation is part of understanding the impact a design outcome has. In another of Participle's projects, *LIFE* (a framework to support families in crisis to build new lives), the agency made "conservative estimates of cost and potential for change by the end of the programme" (Participle. "The Life Programme" 2011):

In 2008, on one family, a minimum of £183,080 was spent by services on engagement, monitoring, reporting and delivery of services, and those costs were expected to continue;

In 2009, more than £200,000 was saved based on changes already occurring in the same family after 12 weeks of being on the LIFE programme. These savings would build over time as the family disengages from numerous enforcement actions and other consequences of their previous behaviour;

The LIFE programme cost is £10,000 per annum per family based on 2 teams working with 38 families. (Participle. "The Life Programme" 2011)

If this level of evaluation could be provided for all co-design projects, the design industry would be able to make a stronger case for its use in future years. The evidence base is slowly growing, and projects like Participle's form a strong foundation, to which other work, like Uscreates' with the University West of England contributes.

Case Study: Early detection of lung cancer: evaluating a co-design approach

Date: 2010

Uscreates took part in a field trial, directed by the *Bristol Social Marketing Centre* at the University of West England, to determine the most effective way to increase the early detection of lung cancer. Lung cancer is the secondly most common cancer to be diagnosed within the UK. By increasing awareness of cancer symptoms, with a view to prompt early detection, the rates of survival can improve. This is the key aim of the *National Awareness and Early*

Diagnosis Initiative, a public sector/third sector partnership between the *Department of Health*, *National Cancer Action Team*, and *Cancer Research UK*, who funded the programme.

An initial literature review suggested that a number of emotive and practical barriers lay behind the low presentation rates of lung cancer symptoms and that social influences and strong community ties could provide opportunities to overcome these.

A phase of qualitative research, or 'co-discovery' drew insight into the attitudes and behaviour surrounding awareness and detection of lung cancer in men aged 50-70 years, the target group for the study. Based on the findings the programme was then employed three different approaches to raise awareness and prompt early detection: traditional communications marketed at the target audience (flyers, posters and billboards), communication materials targeted at GPs, and interventions that resulted from co-designed methods. The different approaches were each trialled in separate areas that were similar in demographic, as well as being combined and tested in a fourth area functioning as a control.

The traditional communications campaign was conceived by a creative and media planner and was delivered as a multi-media campaign appearing on posters, buses and bus shelters, local press, pub media and leaflets posted through doors.

As part of the co-design methodology, Uscreates held a number of co-design workshops to collaborate with community leaders and residents, capitalising on existing community networks. Volunteer groups worked alongside health professionals to co-design community based interventions to raise awareness of lung cancer symptoms and promote early diagnosis.

The key message of the campaign for all the approaches was to 'get a cough that has lasted more than 3 weeks checked'. The community interventions spreading this message, and prompting behaviour, were co-produced and delivered with the volunteers. They included a series of face-to-face interactions at events such as a bingo night, a community BBQ and a walking club. In addition the community organised and hosted a World Cup Final Fun Day which included a football tournament, free BBQ, car boot sale, and a nurse on site doing instant check ups.

The University West of England evaluated the levels of awareness and increased knowledge within the four trial areas. They concluded that "Co-creation has been the most effective in raising awareness and increasing knowledge; it was also the most cost-effective" of the three different approaches in raising awareness and prompting early diagnosis (University of the West of England 2011).



Figure 33. Community volunteers spreading the '3 week cough' message (Uscreates image 2010).

In order for co-design to continue to grow as a methodology and have a future, it is vital that there is more focused evaluation that provides information regarding the return on investment and social impact. This will require a change in mindset from designers who evaluate their work on the innovative and creative nature, rather than the cost benefits. Despite this shift, it is important that designers do not lose one of the qualities that made them successful at co-design in the first place; creativity. There is a danger that a focus of evaluating the impact of co-created designs will result in more mainstream ideas that do not question or push current methods and outcomes for social sustainability.

CONCLUSION

The emergence of co-design

How and why did co-design emerge?

This research has resulted in a theory on the development of the methods of co-design. Three strands of activity lead to the emergence of co-design for social sustainability:

- The development of collaboration as a design method
- Recognition of the idea and practice of social sustainability
- The emergence of a social focused design specialism

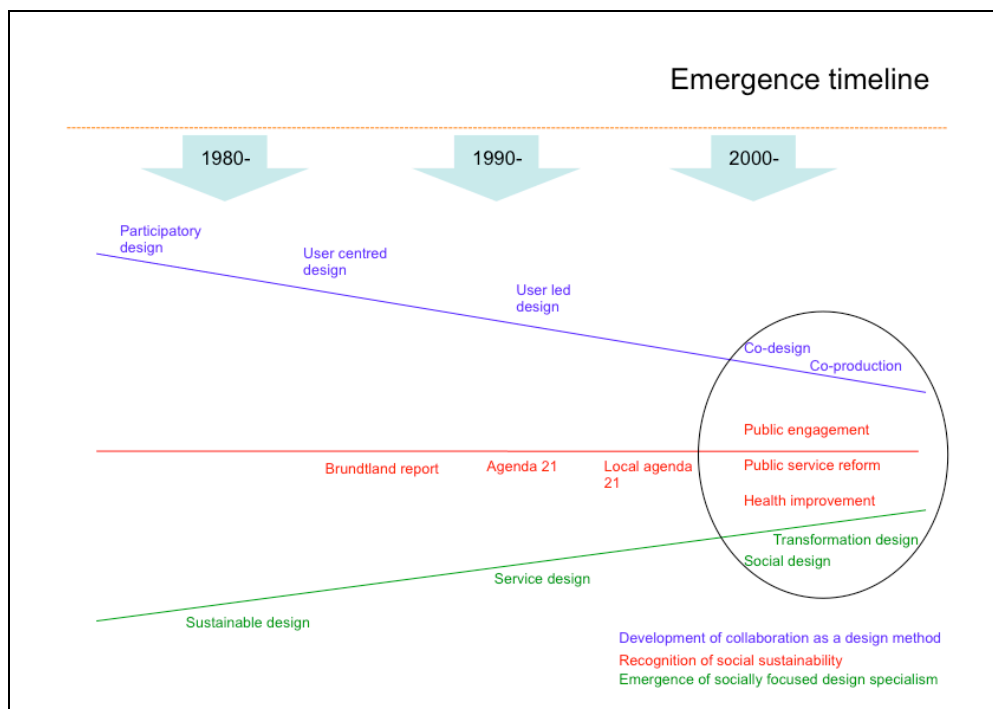


Figure 34. Mapping the emergence of co-design

At the beginning of the 21st century, these three strands became closer in their aims, objectives and implementation, and formed a platform on which co-design could be developed as a method for delivering social sustainability. As chapter 5 outlines in detail, there were key reasons and events behind its development that are demonstrated in the diagram below.

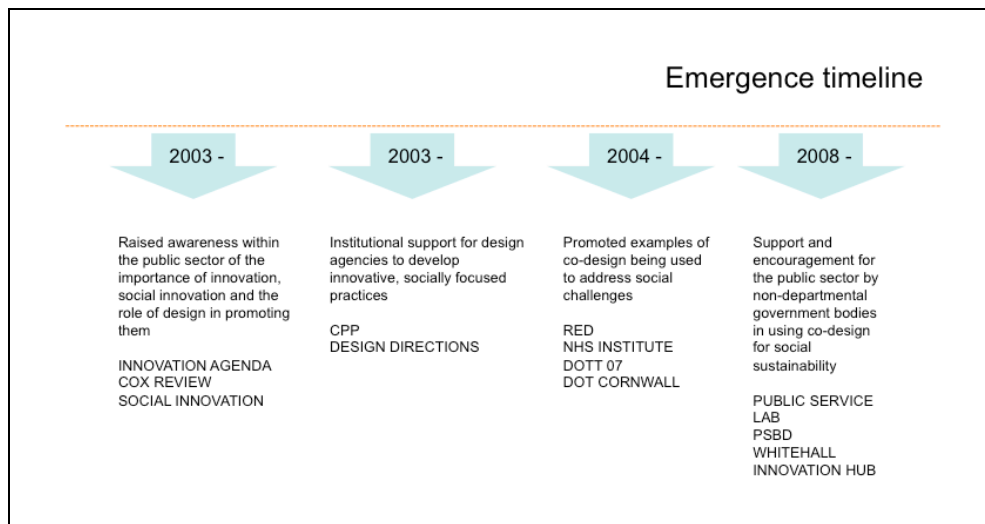


Figure 35. Mapping the emergence of co-design

By mapping the emergence of co-design on a timeline, one conclusion is that the emergence of co-design for social sustainability was politically instigated. New Labour's promotion for more participatory methods of working to address social challenges, rather than civil servants applying a top-down approach, provided an environment and demand for co-design. The government had a vision of a more citizen-centric public sector that engaged the public in decision-making. Prior to New Labour, social progress was focused on specific service delivery improvements in health, education and the police. However it was difficult to drive improvement within a heavily institutionalised and heavily professional system. Public consultation had been introduced and practiced by the preceding Conservative government, however New Labour's more participatory requirements for public involvement was new. Public engagement was useful in meeting New Labour's other agendas as well, such as redirecting services to centre around the user's needs, reducing health inequalities, and building more sustainable communities. Civil servants often did not have the expertise or confidence to deliver engagement work, and in the cases where they did, the majority of the work was consultation-based, rather than a collaboration that truly involved the stakeholders. As a result, external organisations and agencies were commissioned to deliver the engagement, and to advise on the improvement of services and health improvement programmes. The organisations that filled these roles included management consultants, social marketing agencies and charities. From 2004 on, they also included design agencies that specialised in socially focused specialisms using co-design: transformation design, service design, and social design and innovation.

Who led the emergence?

Alongside New Labour's encouragement of public involvement in their improvement and reform agendas, was the promotion and support of innovation within the private and public sectors. Design's role in innovation had been underlined in the 2005 *Cox Review* and as a result, non-departmental public bodies that were design and innovation focused, such as the Design Council and NESTA, grew in stature and importance within government. The role of design was initially regarded as part of the innovation process, the part that would make the idea marketable - i.e. styling and branding. However with the concept of *design thinking* being promoted by IDEO and adopted by the Design Council, amongst others, the external perception of design changed. The practice of design thinking, with its focus on empathy and creativity to generate insights into problems and solutions for meeting user needs, was now seen as deployable throughout the innovation process. The Design Council and NESTA realised that this user-centred approach could also have a role to play in *social* innovation, and it became widely recognised through the work of the Young Foundation from 2005 onwards. There were few design agencies, however, that could fill the role of providing user-centred, design thinking for projects with a social sustainability agenda. Service design agencies like Engine and Live|Work applied a user-centred approach to their work, but the majority of their projects were commercially focused. RED at the Design Council and Thinkpublic were the first organisations attuned to user-centric design within the **public** sector. With support from a range of intermediary bodies, such as the Design Council, NESTA and the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, these organisations were supported in developing their practice.

The Design Council, the Young Foundation and NESTA were seen to be players in supporting the 'supply side' of innovation, that is, supporting innovators and designers, and setting up social enterprises and creative businesses. Through NESTA's *Creative Pioneer Programme* (2004 – 2006), further socially focused design agencies were created. Through work that the Design Council, DOTT, NESTA, NHS Institute and the RSA commissioned, the agencies advanced their user-centric methods in line with New Labour's vision, making them more user-led, participatory and collaborative. The outcome was co-design.

Commissioning design agencies and their co-design methods to deliver engagement for the public sector' socially focused work, was, and still is in many cases, illogical for civil servants. The role of the intermediaries once again has been vital. Through programmes such as DOTT 07, DOTT Cornwall, the Design Council's *Public Services by Design* and NESTA's *Public Service Lab*, design agencies have been commissioned to build a portfolio of work that demonstrates co-design and how it can be beneficially for projects addressing a range of social and public service challenges.

The design agencies themselves must also be acknowledged for the role they have played in developing co-design. They are the ones who have developed a particular collaborative practice and delivered it within the public sector. They have also disseminated their own

materials to promote its use, in blogs, articles in design and public sector magazines⁴³, and in publications such as *Journey to the Interface* (2006), co-authored by Engine's Joe Heapy, which provides commentary and case studies.

There was a general feeling from the designers interviewed for this thesis that they had not only developed co-design practice, but it was they who had led the way, rather than the likes of NESTA and the Design Council:

Well I think they [NESTA, Design Council, etc] are sat on the fringes. They are stood on the sideline of a marathon, with feathers, tickling the runners, really, thinking they are shaping this race. I don't think NESTA is changing or shaping it. They are just talking about it constantly, and they have budgets that talk louder than everyone else. Meanwhile, there are the little companies just getting on with it and making a difference (Downs 2008).

Prior to researching this area, this would also have been my own personal sentiment. However after examining the political landscape, I understand that co-design for social sustainability was a direct result of promotion and commissioning *by* public sector funded bodies such as NESTA and the Design Council *for* other public sector organisations. These intermediary bodies are in a large part responsible for the birth of co-design, and shaping the context for its future, as can be seen through NESTA's current promotion of co-production. However, in agreement with Downs, the designers are developing and delivering the methods and processes to co-design, and it is these which the intermediary bodies illustrate, promote and 'sell' the practice with. This close causal relationship between politics and co-design has been a particularly important finding of this research.

The practice of co-design

Who was/is commissioning co-design?

As identified in chapter 7, there were and still are a number of organisations commissioning co-design; central government, local government, the NHS, charities and non-departmental public bodies. From reviewing these organisations, and the type and number of projects they are commissioning, one can comment on the scale of co-design.

The design industry (regardless of discipline) is often supply-led rather than demand-led, making it an unusual marketplace. Clients and consumers often do not know that they want a design until they have seen it, for example a new product like iPad. Demand then increases,

⁴³ Such as Design Week and the Health Service Journal.

and it is no different with socially focused programmes using co-design. However, although co-design, and more recently the broader activity of co-creation, have become recognised methods in the public sector, the demand for designers to support their delivery has not. This is not to say that there has not been an increase in the number of design agencies offering co-design, or in the scale of the commissions, but it is not a significant increase. More design agencies are using co-design methods for socially sustainable projects, due to programmes such as DOTT, but there are not enough of them to justify calling this a new design discipline.

This may be a reflection of the poor economic situation of the public sector at the moment, or the lack of robust evidence that a collaborative method is having an impact above and beyond other disciplines working towards social sustainability, but it also may be a reflection of a lack of a larger vision on the part of the brokers. It seems that the main aim of the *Creative Pioneer Programme*, *Public Service by Design* and DOTT was to instigate and explore co-design and trial projects, not to achieve social impact.

It is the clients however, who will determine whether the market for socially focused co-design grows. It is not surprising, therefore, that design focused debate often returns to the question – ‘Is what we are doing design?’ – especially when many of the individuals who are promoting it are not designers, but policy makers and strategists, like Charles Leadbeater and Emily Thomas.

What does this mean for the design agencies? Has enough been done to sustain designers and their practice? Does the responsibility for designers to continue to grow and sell their practice lie solely with them? In a word, yes. An environment has been set up for co-design and most designers working in this field have at least five years experience in it. For these agencies, the reduction in support from non-departmental public bodies should not be a barrier to growth, however much younger or start-up agencies may struggle.

What makes designers proficient in practicing co-design?

Designers are able to practice co-design due to a set of qualities that make them adept at collaboration and, naturally, designing. These qualities are centered around creativity, innovation and connection, as discussed in chapter 9, and have contributed to the creation and development of co-design methods. Designers’ visual communication skills engage the people they work with, and designed tools and techniques enable and empower them through participatory methods. This facility at connecting helps develop creativity, and produce innovative solutions.

With the cuts and the reform of the public sector under the new Coalition government, there are fewer opportunities for co-design, and less resource for designers’ involvement. NESTA for example now focuses on ‘co-production’ without designers delivering the work, instead

encouraging public sector front-line staff to lead on participatory approaches for innovation. This on paper seems a logical and sustainable option. If the public sector can facilitate participatory methods to generate ideas to address social challenges, without paying an external party, it is financially beneficial and also raises capabilities within organisations. However, co-design is not purely about collaboration. It is about design, and designers who can work with people not just to generate ideas, but to follow through and deliver them. These are unique skills and ones that a public sector employee is less likely to have and therefore there will always be a case for designers' involvement on collaborative projects.

What was/is co-design being commissioned for?

Co-design was being commissioned primarily in the fields of public engagement, public service reform and health improvement, and this is where it continues to be commissioned under the coalition. However there is scope for co-design to address more subject areas than it currently does.

The factors that affect our quality of life include poverty, numbers of people in employment, opportunities for education and training, health and availability of medical services, human rights and equal opportunities, crime and social disorder, and housing provisions and quality, yet the majority of co-design work centres around health and wellbeing. Under the banner of service reform, it has touched on employment, education opportunities and crime, but only through one-off projects. To date it has not been used to address poverty, human rights, equal opportunities or housing provision and quality. Currently the list of organisations commissioning co-design is relatively small in relation to the number of public sector organisations, departments and teams that could use it. To increase the client base of co-design, a larger, well-evaluated portfolio of work demonstrating the social and economic return on investment needs to be produced and promoted to convince potential clients.

There is also scope for co-design to go further in terms of collaboration. The majority of the co-design projects are still user-centred, with the participants as subjects, rather than partners. As Wang and Oygur (2010) comment on Thomas Kvan's article *Collaborative Design: What is it*, much of what is described as collaboration is essentially cooperation. This is the case at the 'co-discover', 'co-develop' and 'co-deliver stages': the participant is involved, but the designer is ultimately in control. The only stage at which the participant is regularly treated as a partner is at the co-design stage.

The main argument against increased stakeholder participation is that the designer possesses expertise and skills that non-designers do not, and it is these skills that provide successfully developed designs that can be implemented. This may be true for the co-develop stage, which

is truly the domain of the designer, but it does not pertain to the co-discover phase. Case studies, in the form of the *NHS Institute's Experience Based Design* and Uscreates' peer-led research, demonstrate the ability of participants to identify the reasons behind different challenges.

As for the co-delivery stage, the Coalition government is championing a more participatory approach to the implementation of social services and programmes, to which NESTA and the Young Foundation have responded with their work on co-production. This remains relatively unexplored territory for co-design, and is potentially the most radical shift in practice and thinking.

Future of co-design

Further research

This thesis has opened up a number of questions and topics for further research, and two in particular. First, the ethical practice of co-design is considered one of the factors that will determine its future success. Research to more fully understand the ethical considerations and best practice of co-design is therefore vital. There are few in the design industry addressing this, as the ethical implications of this collaborative practice are not yet fully understood by designers.

Second, the evaluation of the impact of co-design beyond that of innovation is equally, if not more important, and needs further work. Demonstrable financial and social benefits of co-design will help to win clients, and also ensure that the practice is as effective as it can possibly be. However any further research on how to evaluate co-design has to be sensitive to it being an innovative methodology, creating innovative outcomes and ensuring this remains.

Significance of the research

This research provides a perspective on why and how co-design has emerged as a design practice, documenting a part of modern design history for the first time. A greater understanding of this subject is significant for academics and practitioners to place a still evolving practice in context, which will be of use in developing best practice in the future. The body of knowledge provides understanding to commissioning bodies for how co-design can be best used, direction to the future training and education of designers in order to produce practitioners who can use co-design for social sustainability, and information that may influence the decision-making of designers, design educators, regional and national public sector organisations and policy makers.

This research has also highlighted the close relationship between design and politics and the role design can play as a more neutral agent of change. Design agencies have been carrying out work fulfilling political agendas, be it engagement or service reform, but with methods and language that are politically neutral, though the projects and political agendas driving them are not. This has provided an alternative narrative for social change that is positive and innovative. This is particularly significant for the Coalition to note in their quest for a more responsive and responsible society. It also has wider implications, as this finding may be of benefit to governments abroad, seeking social change and exploring the best ways to achieve it.

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APPENDIX

Interview:

Joe Heapy – Founder of Engine

16th Jan 2009

How did Engine start?

We have been around for a while and when we started there was no discussion about designers being involved in social innovation. I guess when we set up, we set up purely for the commercial sector, and still most of our work is commercial sector business. And then through various contacts, at the design council, we got involved in a programme they were running called the Renaissance Programme, which looks at what happens if you put designers into schools. And it was conceived in quite a conventional way, looking around, looking at better procurement – a very Design Council approach, but thinking about objects - can you work with schools and persuade Local Authorities to buy better furniture and create better learning environments? But we were frustrated by that approach and starting taking our projects with schools further, towards looking at how the school actually worked, and that's what interested us. And through that programme, I learnt a lot and thought a lot about all this stuff and met with Sophia Parker who, I ended up last year writing that little pamphlet with – Journey to the Interface – but we ended up having lots and lots of discussions because she has spent time as a civil servant, and found herself at the Design Council because she got tired of Whitehall, and design is much funkier than that. So there was this interesting discussion between me as a designer and her as a policy person about what happens in the space between those two things. And she went to Demos, where she became a deputy director and then left and I suppose it was conversations that we had that set out Engine's stall in this area, we didn't have any plans to be working in this away when we set up Engine – it just grew. But I do remember writing letters to Linda Ralph Knight, the editor of design week about 4 or 5 years ago, saying shouldn't designers be doing something in this area? Government keeps talking about ideas, ideas, and there are all these problems and aren't we all about ideas? Just now, because the design industry is very big, just now in the last 6 months, through Dott which have been fantastic, there has started to be an interest. Which for me is reaching the mainstream – having people talking about it. So it must be of interest to the design sector, all of a sudden. But we really just look at understanding developing our practice through what we have learnt in the private sector. And interpret it in our work in the public sector, the public sector in many ways has a much more sophisticated way of understanding services, at a person to person level because the discussions are far more acute and urgent and immediate and far more politicised. In the commercial sector it's a fairly simple, transactional relationship. They spend some money on you and you give them some benefit in return and try to keep you there. So they are both very interesting.

Have you always referred to Engine as a service design company?

No, because Ollie and I have backgrounds in product design and when Engine set up it was an innovation company – just generally. We still needed to use our credibility as product designers to get work, but we quite quickly found that we were being asked to take design led approached in service sector businesses. Especially orange and virgin Atlantic – those were the companies we started off working with. And suddenly we found that we weren't being asked to design services, we were being asked to address strategic business issues.

Was demand for service design client led, or pushed by Engine?

It was client led actually in the early days. I think the project that really made us think 'hang on a minute were not product designers any more' was when we had done some work for Orange, an in store vision totem thing, as industrial designers but it also involved us in film makers to create little adverts and things – all in a multidisciplinary way. And then we suddenly got this request from the brand manager at the time, saying ...someone had decided that they could save millions if they didn't put the orange square on the phone. 06.36 (story continues about the production process of the phone and the disruption to add the logo on and how somebody pointed out the millions they could save, but the brand time pointed out that it's really valuable to have the logo, but they didn't know how to make a case to keep it to the business). 07.30 so peculiarly we were asked as product designers, because it is a product (*picking up the phone*) to have a think about how we could make a case for not taking it off, which meant we got into the weird area of understanding how orange as a business worked and how brands work, and how for example to measure the effectiveness of advertisements of billboards, etc and this is a really intangible experience to measure. We presented a narrative, in a very designy way to say way it was really important and why it shouldn't be taken off the phone. And then, having done that, we started to get all other types of stuff like 'can you think about how we can design voices for voice based services', because as a phone company we want to design services that are voice based. 08.40 (talks about orange's new women's voice) 09.04

We did a really nice piece of work for the brand team, looking at how orange could design voices and voice based services, which is quite a specialist thing to think about. As designers we have this way of acting as a hub for multidisciplinary teams. But this was kind of about how does a designer talk to a voice coach and this artist and we created some workshops where we helped the brand team to understand how voices worked and how to develop their ability to listen in different ways and we worked with voice coach and actors and recorded in a studio lots of voice-overs and it was a really interesting piece of work. And suddenly we thought we are doing design for service businesses, there is no physical product for the work we are doing and that's when we thought we are actually designing for services, not designing for manufacture.

And was the term service design out there at this time?

Bill Hollins talked about service design in the book he wrote in 1996 and he talks lots about service design. There are also people in early software development and web development that were talking about the shift from software engineering to interaction design to people designing services. So Bill was coming from it form management theory and saying manufacturing and service businesses need to think about it to gain – think about the services that they wrap around their products. And he termed this ‘total design’. He has a design management background. He’s the grandfather of design theory to me.

Do you think academic institutes were involved in creating service design and giving a framework for businesses?

I have a product design background and Oliver did an MA in design strategy and innovation, so we had that way in and his contacts were very much on the design management side and looking at how design operated in business, particularly service businesses and how we bring design practice into service businesses.

Do you find a lot of your work, thinking about your example with Orange, is in facilitation – bring people together and talking?

Yes, I think designers have always operated as this hub, speaking many tongues and connecting together different sources of expertise and make decisions and facilitate decisions on behalf of those people towards a better outcome. And I think now that’s been extended to a whole amount of new people who they wouldn’t have been working with before and services, as opposed to products, graphic design or web sites are, people are so important in how they work, they are the key element that brings the service alive. So we have to work with people and design services with instead of for people and that’s really interesting especially in the public sector, because I think a key group of people are the front line staff and the managers. And that’s where it shifts another phase again into realms of change management or transformation design.

What is the proportion of public to private service design work that you do?

15% public, based on revenue, but I think we spend more time on public sector work than we do proportionally to the private sector, because you have to do more and the budgets are smaller – it actually makes no commercial sense to do it at all! But I think that is changing and I think it will continue to change – fingers crossed.

Is your offer different? Does the design process differ between private and public service design?

The differences are probably around the people that get involved, the amount of control the client wants to retain – which I think is greater in the public sector – and the way you have to justify everything. So we tend to do a greater proportion of facilitation and co, ..‘co-ing’ or whatever word you want to call it, ‘working together with’ in the public sector than the commercial sector. They want to be involved – they want to be serviced. They want to come along to a nice workshop and have a day out of the office.

How do you manage the relationships in the public sector?

There is probably more of a blur between the design and delivery (in the public sector). Because I think the processes of insight gathering, design and delivery come together to create public services – where everything happens at once. So you have continuous design. You have continuous generation of insight that leads into design and can be part of delivery and in some cases, being asked as an individual to get involved in design of a service that you use and to provide insight is a form of delivery in itself. It has its own benefits to you as an individual and for the organisation that you work for. So there is a real blurring between those three things in the public sector. It’s much more like software design in a way. You see the commercial sector still has a sense of a product, even if I’m working in a bank, I have a financial product, I design it behind closed doors and then I commission a communication agency to sell it. Generally because they are much more transactional relationships, it (the process) is much more sequential.

With the commercial clients we would hand over at some point, whereas with the Dott projects, some of our time might be delivered straight into the curriculum or straight into a planning meeting, so we are actually contributing to how the school does what it does, during the design process.

I think co-design, or co-creating, or co-production tend to be referred to in relation to the public sector. Do you think that this terminology is public sector specific, whereas it’s user-research, user-experience in the private sector?

Yes, I think there is a couple of things going on. Co-production does happen in the commercial sector in terms of software production. You have Microsoft, Apple, Google opening up their code to communities and people to produce something together, which eventually Google make money out of. The limitation that the commercial sector has I guess are ones of commercial sensitivity around what they are doing, so commercial sector businesses do run focus groups, do have consumer panels which are sophisticated who are semi-professionals of a brand who are brought in – product/service development 24,00 I think it’s very different in the public sector

because of this type of thinking. If you run Nokia, you don't invite 200 members of the public into your headquarters and have them sitting next to desks of people that you employ eating in the canteen, etc.. If you run a hospital you do and they are very intimately involved in your organisation. They become part of the design of the service and they experience the design of the service. In the commercial sector you can control this because it happens at the point of product development. It would be interesting to characterise it, to visualise it somehow.

How do you measure the success of the services you are providing in the public sector?

It's very difficult because we don't necessarily design a service. We do not necessarily get a chance to get involved in the long term delivery even. We can measure the value as it is perceived against lots of criteria how effective we've been, how cost effective it's been, but it is really difficult.

I was called on Monday morning by someone who is doing the evaluation of Dott and my experience of design evaluations is that they are largely based on anecdotal evidence anyway and so generally what they do is to go and find the people who are most positive about it. I've never done a review on how community projects are evaluated, even how master plans of neighbourhoods, of the design of public buildings have an effect on the community. I have a doubt in my mind, even if you found a way, that results and figures can only be used if you can compare them to something that's worse. So you would have to wait as a sector that we had enough examples of projects and there still isn't much.

To be honest, our project was based in a school and we had a closed community and I think we made an impact there. But it was probably only the urban farming project that was allowed to be let loose on a whole load of people. And connected together some schemes that were going on already and Dave Barrie the senior producer is not a designer, but a tv producer, so you might argue that you don't need a designer at all, but someone who is capable of pulling things together and inspiring people. It's like Hillary Cottam winning design of the year, and everyone saying 'but she is not a designer'. I wonder if it's much more about, I don't know...It's early days, I'm not going to make any substantiating or fix statement, but I think it would be really interesting to look at the words that design council is trying to argue the case of design to industry and try and understand what analogues might be as an academic exercise. It's tricky because they have financials to work with so they can look at a company's performance. But even that you start reading into the research and they are still only identifying companies in which in their statistics the company director acknowledged on a very personal level that the influence of design has been positive.

I interviewed John Thackara and asked him what service designers bring to public projects that management consultants or any other non-public sector professionals don't bring. I would be interested to hear what you think.

I think there is something about ways of seeing people and what people do and what people want to do and it's kind of applied empathy, which is a wanky term, I've come across it a lot with work in the public sector, people are saying 'I'm a training social worker, or I'm a training medical observer' and I've spent a day with you (the designer) and you see all this stuff very differently and make connections that I don't make. So there is this quality in ways of seeing that designer do bring, which perhaps comes from an ability to see ... and wants in a different kind of way and slosh about in ambiguity. They need new insights on their customers.

If you bring ways of seeing through the eyes of other people together with our ability to make things feel quite real quickly (*same point Hillary Cottam makes*) – this idea of prototyping, even making process feel quite real and creative, I think those two things together to the core skills of a designer around making things tangible and visual communication plus this additional empathic perspective....we don't have a monopoly on creative thinking, but you would be surprised on how difficult some organisations find it. I think somewhere in that combination there is some value, We spent a lot of time trying to sell design to people that design didn't try to sell it's self to before – business and public sector and a lot of time arguing the case and sometimes I do think 'what do we bring to this?' We meet people who are very capable and services have operated fine without designers for hundreds of years. People keep coming back and they are interested in what we do.

Do you use the word 'design' when talking to clients? Do sell yourself on the fact that it is design?

We went through a phase of not talking about it at all, and now we are talking about it again because I think things have happened. On the business side, business schools are becoming much more interested in design, creativity and innovation. So the word design has a legitimacy that it didn't have in the business sector – where designers were commissioned to make the office look nice or whatever. The many years, decades of the design management institute and the Design Council banging on about design is working. And I think there is also an advantage...when we talk about design in the public sector, we don't talk about it as a professional skill sector, we talk about it as a collaborative and creative approach to getting something done. We facilitated that and bring skills to that. What is interesting is often we are often interpreted simply as facilitators. And actually we're not professional facilitators, we facilitate as part of the design process towards an outcome. So we actually go in as people who are going to facilitate and its focused on user/citizen engagement and then the core skill of us as designers are, we introduce slowly and gradually making our workshops look nice, or storyboards or whatever. It's communicated really well and that is the part that they couldn't

have done. What they appreciate less is the whole other bit, which they probably couldn't have done either which is getting each other talking in the right way.

Using the word design within the Dott project has been heavily debated. What are your thoughts?

I think that has been a problem in Dott and there was a moment when it was decided that it was all about sustainability because there was a panic where they thought 'shit, how are we going to communicate this to people of the NE'. It's a big old mix of white, middle class people trying to address social issues. It's just going to make no sense to anybody. There was an originally communications campaign that was designed around the question 'who designs your life?' which was put on buses and driven around Newcastle, but it never appeared in the final exhibition, as far as I could see. I thought it was an interesting question, and the answer that we would have liked to have given is 'well you do.' I thought that was the conversation they were trying to have through dott.